



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS

TUESDAY — 15 Nov 2022



	International	National	Regional and Local
Events, Opportunities Go to articles	11/15 Day 265 of the Russia invasion 11/15 Canada: Ukraine aid, Russian sanctions 11/15 Ukraine testing ground for West weapons 11/15 China Covid curbs fuel unrest 11/15 Japan to reopen to cruise ships 11/15 Beijing signals optimism with US 11/15 Britain braces for painful budget cuts 11/14 Germany, Poland in takeovers of gas firms 11/14 Key takeaways Biden, Xi meeting 11/14 China hails 'new era' of dominance 11/14 Renewed Iran attacks in northern Iraq 11/14 Haiti prime minister ousts top officials 11/14 China consumer, factory activity down 11/14 Pakistan, Afghan border clash: closure 11/14 US opens probe into killing of journalist 11/14 US Navy seizes Iran missile fuel to Yemen 11/14 Iran unleashes wrath on youthful protesters 11/14 EU border agency: illegal migration spiking 11/14 UK pulls troops Mali peacekeeping mission 11/14 Brazil, Indonesia, Congo sign forest pact	11/15 Tech firms downsize: dump office space 11/14 CDC tracking rise of new variant: BN.1 11/14 How meth worsened the fentanyl crisis 11/14 Flu cases, hospitalizations double in week 11/14 Pandemic drags on, struggle new balance 11/14 Federal court blocks student debt program 11/14 Another union rejects freight railroads deal 11/14 Immediate police crisis: new officer training 11/14 NYC: e-bike batteries behind 200 fires 11/14 CIA director warns Russia counterpart 11/14 DOT: airlines to refund \$600M to flyers 11/14 Border numbers continue to set records 11/14 Quake early-warning system: on cellphone	11/14 RSV cases surge, patients flood hospitals 11/14 Gang graffiti 'unsolicited creative' art? 11/14 Workers on H-1B visas face challenges 11/14 Ferries on alternating schedules for now 11/14 Seattle mayor eyes gunfire detection tech 11/14 Students rally, demand more school safety 11/14 Seattle city budget more than \$200M in hole 11/14 Seattle housing market widens budget gap 11/14 Washington crabbing season canceled 11/14 WA will not renew Cooke fish farms leases 11/14 Seattle businesses \$1.3B forgiveness loans
Cyber, Tech Awareness Go to articles	11/15 Chinese hackers target govt. agencies 11/14 Whoosh confirms data breach 11/14 French tech firm denies getting hacked 11/14 NKorea as mastermind crypto cybercrime 11/14 UK shoppers lost \$18M to scammers 2021 11/14 Ties between ransom groups, Russia govt? 11/14 New dangerous BatLoader malware dropper	11/14 Mass email extortion campaign 11/14 Google settles location tracking probe 11/14 CISA alert: unpatched Zimbra platforms 11/14 Russian hackers claim hack FBI website 11/14 Layoff spree spells end of era for Big Tech 11/14 Trap: massive network of imposter domains 11/14 K-12 schools remain top target cyberattacks	11/14 Tech layoffs create anxiety, opportunity
Terrorism, Extremism Go to articles	11/15 Turkey: 50 in custody over bombing 11/15 Boko Haram kills women over witchcraft 11/14 Maldives arrest 14; IS-linked bomb plot 11/14 Taliban revive Sharia-law punishments 11/14 Turkey detains Syrian bombing suspect 11/14 ISIS funding terrorism via Tinder scams	11/14 Turkey minister: US complicit in bombing 11/14 US: Iran threats to ex-officials still persist	
Suspicious, Unusual Go to articles	11/15 German army uniforms with 'SS' labels 11/14 Consumption, not crowd, key to climate	11/14 Horrifying drug 'Tranq Dope' is spreading	11/14 UW research: racist real estate covenants 11/14 Snohomish Co. cold case solved after 42yrs
Crime, Criminals Go to articles	11/15 Activists attack painting in Vienna museum 11/15 Europol: 59 suspected scammers arrested 11/14 RCMP: public utility worker spied for China	11/14 FBI informants in Proud Boys 11/14 Dominican drug lord pleads guilty 11/14 UVA shooting suspect apprehended 11/14 FBI: juvenile in dozens HBCU threats 11/14 Uvalde PD chief knew kids needed rescue	11/14 Ingraham High before fatal shooting? 11/14 Federal Way police fatally shoot man 11/14 Police fatally shoot carjacking suspect 11/14 Lakewood cop killer's driver faces 3rd trial 11/14 SEA airport baggage thefts hit all-time high 11/14 Officials: 4 slain Idaho students are victims

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Events, Opportunities

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Canada: Ukraine aid, Russian sanctions
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/11/15/canada-Justin-Trudeau-military-assistance-Ukraine-sanctions-Russia-Moscow-sanctions-Margaret-Atwood-Jim-Carey/9861668483408/
GIST	Nov. 14 (UPI) -- Canada on Monday announced an additional \$375.7 million in military assistance for Ukraine and sanctions targeting nearly two dozen Russians, prompting the Kremlin to blacklist 100 Canadians, including actor Jim Carey and writer Margaret Atwood, in retaliation.

Prime Minister [Justin Trudeau](#) announced the military contribution and sanctions while in Bali, Indonesia, to attend the [G20](#) economic summit.

"We, along with other members of the international community, will continue to use every tool at our disposal to hold Russia accountable for its brutal actions against Ukraine," the prime minister said in [a statement](#).

The assistance of weapons as well as non-lethal surveillance and communications equipment, fuel and medical supplies lifts Canada's total military commitment to Ukraine to more than \$751 million. That is also on top of the \$2.5 billion in assistance, including humanitarian and otherwise, that Ottawa has contributed to Kyiv's fight against Russia.

"Thank you, Justin Trudeau and [the Canadian people]," Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky](#) [tweeted](#) Thursday. "This is more evidence that [Ukraine] and [Canada] are true allies who share common values and have the same goals.

"We will always remember the help that sister [Canada] provided in the most difficult times. Together we will win!"

Ottawa also added 23 members of Russia's justice and security sectors, including police officers, prosecutors, judges and prison officials, to its list of sanctioned Russians on accusations of being involved in gross and systematic human rights violations against opposition leaders, Trudeau said.

According to Global Affairs Canada, the sanctions went into effect Thursday.

Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly explained [via Twitter](#) they are blacklisting those responsible for the arrest of Russian activist Vladimir Kara-Mruza -- [who's been behind bars since April](#) over his criticism of the Kremlin's war -- and those "who enacted a witch hunt against him & other Russian dissidents."

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, Canada has sanctioned more than 1,400 people and entities accused of being complicit in Russian President Vladimir Putin's war.

Russia has responded to some of those actions with entry bans of its own, including on Thursday when its foreign ministry sanctioned 100 Canadians.

The country's foreign ministry said in [a statement](#) that politicians, academics, company leaders and a handful of writers and entertainers were sanctioned over their "aggressive anti-Russian course."

Atwood jested online that the Russian entry ban has ruined the weekend getaway she and Carey had planned for Moscow.

"Guess it will have to be Kyiv instead," she said.

"Yes, [Margaret Atwood], I'm afraid the worst has happened. We're banned from Russia ... but the problems of 100 Canadians don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world!" Carey replied, paraphrasing a famous quote quoting from the World War II film "Casablanca."

"We'll always have Paris," he continued. "Here's looking at you, kid."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Japan to reopen to cruise ships
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/travel-health-covid-business-japan-10393aa5e6e8d2fe78098b489da60fc5
GIST	TOKYO (AP) — Japan will lift a more than 2 1/2-year ban on international cruise ships that was imposed following a deadly coronavirus outbreak on the cruise ship Diamond Princess at the beginning of the pandemic, transport officials said Tuesday.

The Transport Ministry said cruise ship operators and port authorities' associations have adopted anti-virus guidelines and that Japan is now ready to resume its international cruise operations while receiving foreign ships at its ports.

"Japan is now ready to start receiving international cruise ships again," said Transport and Tourism Minister Tetsuo Saito. "We will create an environment that allows tourists to enjoy their cruise without worry while in Japan."

Exact schedule for cruise ships has not been announced. Among the first is a Japanese ship departing from Yokohama in December for Mauritius and returning in January.

Japan has barred international cruise ships since March 2020, after the outbreak on the Diamond Princess forced 3,711 passengers and crew members to quarantine on board for two weeks, during which 13 people died and more than 700 others were infected.

Japan chose to isolate the crew and passengers while keeping them on board as a way of border control, but was also criticized for turning the ship into a virus incubator.

Cruise ship operators are expected to discuss with local authorities further details about their port entry plans. Japan's resumption of international cruise liners comes more than a year after they returned to the United States and Europe.

Under the new guidelines, all crew members must have three received three coronavirus vaccine shots while most passengers must be vaccinated at least twice. The guideline also calls for thorough ventilation, distancing and disinfecting of common areas.

Japan, after much delay compared to many other countries, reopened its borders to individual foreign tourists in October and a resumption of international cruise ship operations will further help revive the country's tourism that has been badly hit by the pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, more than 2.15 million cruise ship passengers visited Japan in 2019, according to the Transport and Tourism Ministry.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 How meth worsened the fentanyl crisis
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/meth-fentanyl-combo-emerges-as-new-driver-of-overdose-deaths-11668438636?mod=hp_lead_pos5
GIST	<p>WEST JORDAN, Utah—When Jeannette Martinez hugged her grandson on the last night of his life, she could feel his heart pounding.</p> <p>"Rio, are you doing meth?" she asked.</p> <p>The powerful stimulant methamphetamine can cause cardiac strain, and Rio Ryan had complained of chest pains. Also alarming that evening in March: pinholes Ms. Martinez saw between Mr. Ryan's fingers, where she said the 21-year-old injected drugs. He giggled in response.</p> <p>He died the next morning in his basement bedroom at his grandmother's house.</p> <p>Testing revealed his body had a combination of drugs: meth and heroin, along with traces of fentanyl. Mr. Ryan, who had used meth and heroin for years, had recently started trying fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid, he had told his family.</p> <p>The drug combination put him at the center of a deepening complication in the nation's overdose crisis.</p>

The pairing of meth, which can also cause psychosis and erratic, risky behavior, and [opioids such as fentanyl, of which even small doses can prove fatal](#), is among the nation's fastest-rising causes of overdose deaths.

One in five of the total fatal overdoses last year involved an opioid and a psychostimulant, a drug class dominated by meth, preliminary federal data show. A decade earlier, about 2% of drug deaths involved such combinations.

Meth on its own can cause potentially fatal heart damage and sometimes acute overdoses, and meth-related deaths are broadly surging. Mixing its use with powerful opioids such as fentanyl can be even deadlier. Close to two-thirds of the people who died while on psychostimulants last year also had opioids in their systems.

Sometimes meth users are accidentally exposed to fentanyl. But many users are purposefully using meth and opioids simultaneously or in sequence in search of balancing or offsetting effects, researchers say. Meth, a stimulant that makes people feel energized, also can make it easier for users to consume greater quantities of opioids, said Christopher Jones, acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. And mental-health issues that meth sometimes causes—such as paranoia and hallucinations—can compound risks for dual users, researchers say.

The rise in fatalities involving stimulants, often combined with opioids, has created a fourth wave of the decadeslong U.S. overdose-death crisis, according to Dr. Daniel Ciccarone, a professor of addiction medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. Deaths from [combinations of opioids and cocaine](#), another stimulant, are also climbing.

The first wave was triggered by prescription opioids, which launched the U.S. into an escalating opioid crisis beginning in the 1990s. After a crackdown on the pharmaceuticals came a rise in heroin, as addicts turned to alternatives. Then came illegal forms of [fentanyl, the man-made opioid that has become ubiquitous](#) on its own and as an often-unexpected additive to other drugs, including heroin, cocaine and fake versions of prescription pills such as oxycodone. Fentanyl drove U.S. overdose deaths to a record-breaking tally of more than 108,000 last year, according to the federal data.

Now, the combination of meth and opioids—especially fentanyl—is supercharging those numbers. Meth-related deaths, though smaller in number, are increasing at a faster rate than opioid and overall drug fatalities.

About 33,400 deaths last year involved psychostimulants such as meth, up more than 340% from roughly 7,500 five years earlier, the federal data show. In the same time span, deaths involving synthetic opioids like fentanyl rose about 270% to around 72,000, and overall drug fatalities rose about 71%.

Mr. Ryan had long bounced between active addiction and periods of sobriety, while also grappling with anxiety, depression and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Meth and opioids were readily available whenever he turned to them.

“That’s part of the problem, it’s so easy to get drugs,” said Mr. Ryan’s mother, Alicia Vigil-Ryan. “It’s so much more available than treatment.”

Meth and fentanyl have both become more plentiful around the country, overlapping territories in ways that used to be less common. Traffickers are flooding meth into the Northeast and other markets where it once was harder to find, while fentanyl has surged into Western states, such as California, where meth has long been prevalent.

Parts of the Southeast and Appalachia have in recent years recorded rises in overdose fatalities as users increasingly died with meth and opioids in their systems, federal data show.

As with the [illicit fentanyl trade](#), meth is made entirely from chemicals and is largely produced and distributed by Mexican drug cartels that make a potent version in clandestine labs and smuggle it north, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

“If we just follow the trajectory of the emergence of fentanyl, the same thing is happening on the meth side, and then they’re converging,” said Dr. Gary Tsai, director of substance-abuse prevention and control for Los Angeles County’s public-health department.

People sometimes take illicit drug combinations unintentionally. Dealers might sloppily cut the drugs in the same place, leading to cross-contamination, while others might lace meth with fentanyl to hook more users, researchers and former users say. This exposure can end up seeding addiction to both drugs.

Kristina Burkett-Hilliard, 35, said she started to notice unusual effects within a couple of years of starting meth in 2018, including times the drug would cause her to nod off, an odd reaction to a drug users say more commonly makes it hard to sleep.

One day, she said, she learned why from a dealer: Her meth was cut with fentanyl. She said she kept using but bought from dealers she trusted to try to avoid batches she feared had too much fentanyl, leery of its high potency.

Ms. Burkett-Hilliard, who is from Sunbury, Ohio, began detoxing this summer following a relapse.

Using both drugs

Other users deliberately use both meth and opioids. Andrew Simler, a 33-year-old in Morrisdale, Pa., said opioids sometimes helped counteract how wired meth made him feel. He abused Suboxone, a prescription opioid that is used to treat opioid addiction but is also sometimes taken illicitly.

“I needed to come down so people wouldn’t see me all twacked out,” said Mr. Simler, who has been in recovery for more than two years and works as a counselor in the detox unit at Cove Forge Behavioral Health Center, a treatment facility in central Pennsylvania.

He began abusing opioids in his late teens, and in college started taking synthetic stimulants known on the street as bath salts. He said the substances helped him manage uncomfortable feelings. “I latched onto the drugs that gave me the feelings I felt like my life was missing,” Mr. Simler said.

Mr. Simler got into meth in his late 20s when, he said, the stimulant became pervasive and less expensive as dealers competed for business in a state that already had an entrenched opioid problem. “It’s hard to find someone who only uses opiates anymore, or only uses meth,” he said.

Using both drugs can complicate treatment, addiction specialists said. Users sometimes arrive at rehab centers in psychotic states and need to be hospitalized. Research shows dual users are more likely to engage in risky behaviors like sharing and reusing syringes, and less likely to stay in treatment, Dr. Jones at the CDC said. And while there are medications to treat opioid addiction, no drugs are approved to help wean people off meth.

Meth can maintain a powerful allure that is difficult to break, even as people progress through treatment, said Troy Mays, nursing director at the facility where Mr. Simler works. The drug triggers a huge release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that creates feelings of pleasure and rewards. “They still love methamphetamine, like they enjoy the high, the experience of using it,” he said.

Mr. Simler said he still feels meth’s pull in moments of stress. “It’s a dirty drug, it made me feel dirty,” he said. “It made me feel all kinds of empty.”

The spread of both meth and fentanyl has put the especially dangerous drugs within easy reach of many with mental-health challenges, according to addiction experts, users and their families.

Schuyler Roberson, from Lawsonville, N.C., died in April at age 24 from a fentanyl and meth overdose. She wasn't a daily user but took illicit substances when she was off her medication for bipolar disorder, said her mother, Tamatha Adkins-Ford.

She was creative and musical, a bassoon player who spent her last three years of high school in an arts program, her mother said. They attended ballets, plays, musicals and movies together during her childhood.

They locked horns later over her drug use. Ms. Adkins-Ford worried Ms. Roberson couldn't care for her young son, now 6, and fought to get him in his father's care.

"I loved her and would do anything to make her be OK, but I was going to tell her things she didn't want to hear," Ms. Adkins-Ford said.

She said she first learned of her daughter's meth and opioid use in 2018, when Ms. Roberson went into rehab for what she said was alcohol treatment and tested positive for the drugs. Later that year, Ms. Roberson's boyfriend, a Marine veteran who struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder, killed himself with a gun in front of her.

Ms. Adkins-Ford suspected that her daughter died on a mix of meth and fentanyl but said it was still a blow when she received the toxicology results that confirmed it. "That was my child, and I couldn't fix that for her," Ms. Adkins-Ford said.

About 75% of meth-related deaths in North Carolina also involved fentanyl in 2021, up from 22% in 2016, according to provisional state data based on the drug classes including those substances. "It feels like we are in a different world," said Dr. Michelle Aurelius, the state's chief medical examiner, regarding fatal multi-drug overdoses.

Surviving previous waves

The meth-fentanyl combination has also proved deadly to some people who survived previous waves of the drug crisis.

Sally Smith, a Huntington, Ind., woman who struggled with bipolar disorder and was prone to self-medicating, began abusing prescription pain pills roughly two decades ago, according to her mother, Susan Bowman.

A mother of four, she progressed to meth, then heroin and later fentanyl. On the morning of March 6, she bought meth from a dealer after sending him a Facebook message saying "I need some shit," according to court documents stemming from his arrest and subsequent conviction. That afternoon, after using the meth, she went back to the dealer to buy opioids, the documents show.

After injecting the opioids when she got home, the 41-year-old lay down and never woke up. A toxicology report from her blood revealed high levels of meth and para-fluorofentanyl, one of fentanyl's chemical cousins.

Mr. Ryan had a tendency to leap headlong into whatever interested him, including drugs, his family said. He played football and hockey and read everything from "Crime and Punishment" to Carl Sandburg's poetry.

He was deeply affected in junior high by the shooting death of two classmates, his mother said. A succession of substances followed: She said he started drinking alcohol in junior high, tried prescription pills by 8th grade and began using meth in 10th grade.

"Meth is what turned our life into a nightmare," Mrs. Vigil-Ryan said.

When he used meth, she said, he was wound up and talked a mile a minute. It gave him confidence and energy, but he was also ornery and agitated when he was coming down.

He began using heroin within months of starting meth. He ran away, repeatedly, at one point briefly living in a homeless encampment in downtown Salt Lake City. He escaped from two rehabilitation centers and broke into cars looking for money. His parents sometimes went searching for him.

“For the last six years of his life I thought his life was at risk every day,” his father, Dan Ryan, said. “There were a lot of times we didn’t know if he was going to come home or not.”

His parents moved with their teenage daughter to Albuquerque from the Salt Lake City area in June 2021. Rio Ryan, 20 at the time, stayed in Utah with Ms. Martinez, his maternal grandmother, and her husband in their West Jordan home.

Mr. Ryan and Ms. Martinez, 69, had a close bond. They attended powwows together in Utah, connecting to Ms. Martinez’s Native American roots. He was open with her about his drug use, she said, and she struggled to balance enabling him, knowing he was an addict, with her fears he would risk his life on the street looking for cash.

His family said they believe he stole and dealt to support his habit. He could also be generous and kind, urging friends in high school to work with him to bring sandwiches to homeless people, or giving away his jacket to a homeless person, his family said.

He started taking an injectable opioid treatment medication months before he died, earning a dog-tag necklace from his treatment provider. He made an art project, a white tree on green paper, with leaves listing reasons to pursue sobriety. Atop the tree: “My Grandma.” Ms. Martinez said she sometimes lies on Mr. Ryan’s bed, or wears his flannel shirt, to feel close to him.

He continued to use meth while in treatment for opioids. He told his mother he missed heroin, which helped offset the feelings of coming off a meth high. He also told her shortly before he died that he was trying fentanyl. “It scared him, and he liked it,” she said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Tech firms downsize: dump office space
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/meta-lyft-salesforce-and-other-tech-firms-dump-office-space-as-they-downsize-11668477701?mod=hp_major_pos1#cxrecs_s
GIST	<p>The big technology companies that drove U.S. office demand for years as they expanded their empires are now canceling leases and flooding business districts with office space as they downsize.</p> <p>Facebook owner Meta Platforms Inc., Lyft Inc., Salesforce.com Inc. and other tech companies are shedding millions of square feet of office space in San Francisco, Silicon Valley, New York, Austin, Texas, and elsewhere. Amazon.com Inc. stopped construction in July on new office buildings amid a hiring freeze and is now preparing to lay off thousands of workers.</p> <p>While leasing from all businesses declined during the pandemic, the tech sector accounted for the largest portion of the leasing that took place, according to real estate services firm CBRE Group Inc. Some tech companies, such as Alphabet Inc.’s Google, continued to expand their office footprints during that period.</p> <p>Now, with the prospect of a recession looming and companies slashing payroll, tech firms find they have too many floors of office space and want to unload big chunks of it.</p> <p>Companies in the technology sector have placed about 30 million square feet of office space on the sublease market, more than triple the 9.5 million square feet they looked to sublet in the fourth quarter of 2019, according to CBRE.</p>

“Downsizing is much more of a threat than work from home,” said Nicholas Bloom, an economics professor at Stanford University.

Big tech’s retreat is a blow to the office market and to many city economies, which for several years have counted on the sector’s real estate appetite to power growth.

The national office vacancy rate is 12.5%, up from 9.6% in 2019 and the highest since 2011, according to data firm [CoStar Group](#) Inc. Overall, about 212 million square feet of sublease space is on the market, a record since CoStar started tracking the statistic in 2005.

Office buildings are backed by \$1.2 trillion of the \$5.4 trillion in total commercial real estate debt that was outstanding at the end of the second quarter—more debt than any other asset type other than apartment buildings, according to data firm Trepp Inc. If landlords begin defaulting at a high rate on their mortgages, their distress could ripple through the financial system.

Technology firms’ reversal has been widespread. The sector has become a major driver of office demand in dozens of cities including Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Nashville, San Diego and Detroit. Overall, tech firms have about 500 million square feet of office space in 30 North American markets, according to CBRE.

The pullback has been particularly hard on San Francisco. Businesses leased 850,000 square feet in the third quarter compared with the average in the five years leading up to the pandemic of about 2 million square feet per quarter, said Derek Daniels, San Francisco research director at the commercial real estate services firm Colliers International.

Salesforce, one of the city’s biggest employers, this year said it was looking to cut about one-third of the space it occupies in the 43-story tower it owns in the business district.

“Right at the beginning of summer there was a flurry of new leasing,” Mr. Daniels said. “But since then it has been quiet.”

Other tech companies, meanwhile, are looking to reduce office space even in fast-growing cities such as Austin. Meta, which earlier this year agreed to be the anchor of a new skyscraper under construction in the Texas capital, is now trying to sublease that space.

The turnabout in office demand could mark the end of a long cycle where tech firms were often the biggest presence in new office towers. Even during the pandemic, when many businesses shifted to hybrid-work strategies, many tech companies kept leasing space because they were on a hiring spree.

Tech firms also showed a preference for higher-end workspace, a move that they thought helped attract top talent and enabled landlords to command top dollar for high-quality new properties.

Tech companies last year “were trying to upgrade their inventory of office space” for recruiting and retaining workers in a tough labor market, said Colin Yasukochi, executive director of CBRE’s Tech Insights Center. After hiring tens of thousands of employees during the pandemic, he added, companies felt “the worst thing that could happen is for us to have people come flooding back in and us having not enough space.”

In 2021, the tech sector led all other businesses by accounting for 20.5% of U.S. office leasing activity, according to CBRE. By comparison, the finance sector and the business services sector accounted for 16%.

Big tech wasn’t just renting space. It [was a big buyer, too](#). Amazon bought the former Lord & Taylor department store in Manhattan for \$978 million, and Facebook bought an office campus in Bellevue, Wash., for \$368 million.

	<p>The sector's demand for office space has been different over the past decade than it was during the dot-com boom of the 1990s. Back then, companies would lease space in anticipation of growth. When the bubble burst "you had buildings with the shrink wrap on that had never been touched," said Alexander Goldfarb, senior analyst at Piper Sandler.</p> <p>"This time you didn't have that," he added. "Tech emerged as a growing industry that only went up. The tech giants were taking space and rapidly filling it, and then committing to new space."</p> <p>As the pandemic went into its third year, the worst fears of companies going to all-remote workplace plans weren't realized. Instead, shrinking head count is what is dulling office demand. This month, both Lyft and Meta said they were cutting 13% of their staff.</p> <p>Mr. Yasukochi predicted downsizing would continue to dampen tech's demand for office space. "The layoffs are starting to gain momentum," he said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Seattle city budget more than \$200M in hole
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3713748/seattle-budget-now-more-than-200-million-in-the-hole/
GIST	<p>Seattle is facing an \$82.3 million revenue shortfall in its 2023-2024 budget, according to the city's Revenue and Forecast Council's November Report.</p> <p>This amount, alongside the original \$141 million general-fund deficit the city faces, means certain infrastructure projects and programs will go unfunded over the next few years, according to the Seattle City Council.</p> <p>"There is future uncertainty due to rising inflation and global," Seattle City Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda said at the most recent city council meeting. "All of this is compounding an already heightened level of hardship and stress in our community for working families. And despite this uncertainty, and looming hardship, this is a package that we are releasing today."</p> <p>Mosqueda also operates as the Chair of the Budgeting Committee, making it her responsibility to issue a proposal for the city's budget.</p> <p>Before Mosqueda revealed the additional \$82.3 million shortfall, the city, as announced by Mayor Bruce Harrell back in September, already faced an existing \$141 million operating budget deficit in 2023 and \$152 million deficit in 2024.</p> <p>Mosqueda revealed in her budget package the drop in the city's budget directly correlates with the Real Estate Excise Tax decreasing by \$64 million, the Sweetened Beverage Tax decreasing by \$4.5 million over the past two years, and the General Fund being down by \$9.4 million.</p> <p>"There weren't easy answers in this year's budget, but there were core values to start from: Transparency and accountability, investing in key and core city services for our working families and small businesses, preventing cliffs in services, and avoiding austerity to ensure a resilient economy," said Mosqueda.</p> <p>Through two public hearings, eight public meetings, and more than 100 proposed amendments from councilmembers, Seattle City Council has narrowed the budget's focus to five points: The city's domestic violence, homelessness, and food security providers; Equitable Development Initiative projects; Green New Deal investments; school-based health centers; and affordable housing.</p> <p>"We worked in partnership with King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) to ensure that emergency shelter and services were invested in. Together, we closed the \$9.4 million flip that could have impacted 20 programs across 12 agencies due to a budgetary error," Mosqueda said. "We closed that gap and we fixed that issue so that there would be no reduction austerity or cuts to the swamp organizations [who are] providing critical services to folks who are unsheltered."</p>

	<p>Included in the budget is a \$253 million proposal for affordable housing – a more than \$50 million increase over the last budget for building rental housing, more supportive services, and first-time ownership opportunities, according to the Office of Housing.</p> <p>The housing budget reflects a 400% increase over the past six years, as the city’s investments into affordable housing went from roughly \$52 million in 2016, to around \$200 million in 2022, to now \$253 million.</p> <p>The \$50 million increase is due to JumpStart, a payroll tax that applies to Seattle companies with payrolls above \$7 million.</p> <p>In the budget is an \$18 million proposal for increased health centers in schools, including a new \$3 million investment in mental health services in response to the demand for more mental health providers by students impacted by gun violence, according to Mosqueda.</p> <p>“In the wake of the shooting at our high school, and the call for additional investments in mental health counselors, this budget invests in ongoing investments in violence reduction, as well as mental health counselors will be used as we seek as a city to help respond to the students demand for additional investment and safety,” Mosqueda said.</p> <p>The Revenue and Forecast Council expects the city’s budget issues to be short-lived, with recovery expected to start by mid-2023. The council forecasts the city will not return to current city-wide employment levels until 2025.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Gang graffiti ‘unsolicited creative’ art?
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3710764/rantz-seattle-councilmember-defends-gang-graffiti-unsolicited-creative-expression-mosqueda/
GIST	<p>Seattle councilmember Teresa Mosqueda thinks gang graffiti and Antifa tagging is “unsolicited creative expression” and art. She thinks cleaning it up is just a handout to “for-profit graffiti removal businesses.”</p> <p>The city of Seattle is inundated with graffiti, much coming from local gang members and Antifa thugs. It prompted a proposal by Mayor Bruce Harrell to implement a six-point program to clean it up. The program includes funding graffiti abatement and charging prolific taggers.</p> <p>There are clear problems with Harrell’s plan. But Mosqueda expresses a remarkably irresponsible and ignorant criticism.</p> <p>Mosqueda effectively endorses gang graffiti</p> <p>Police do not arrest taggers, and they won’t be booked. The Seattle Police Department is dangerously understaffed. More problematic, the Seattle City Attorney is unlikely to prioritize their prosecution, no matter how prolific.</p> <p>While cleaning up the gang symbols and other tagging helps make the city feel safer, without proper enforcement, painting over graffiti is an extremely short-term solution. The Bartell Drug Store in Wallingford is routinely tagged by Antifa (or Antifa-sympathizing) thugs who regularly smear cops on the building’s exterior.</p> <p>Mosqueda isn’t a fan of Harrell’s program, either. But she opposes it for laughable reasons. She sees nothing wrong with gang and Antifa graffiti. She endorsed what she thinks is an “insightful comment on graffiti abatement” by Urban Artworks project director Paul Nunn.</p> <p>It’s not graffiti. It’s ‘unsolicited creative expression’</p>

Nunn chastised the “purely punitive approach to erasing graffiti from the urban landscape” because he would rather incentivize what he’s pretending is art.

Indeed, he argues tagging is merely “unsolicited creative expression” and not “truly detrimental vandalism.” Tell that to businesses that are tagged with gang symbols and messages calling cops murderers.

Businesses overwhelmed with graffiti often see fewer customers. No one wants to frequent a restaurant, for example, covered in gang signs. And it’s not especially welcoming walking into a coffee shop tagged with “ACAB” at its entrance. Those businesses, many struggling to survive due to the area’s crime surge, are burdened with the costs of cleaning it all up. Mosqueda doesn’t seem to mind.

I mean ... how dumb is this?

Pretending that graffiti is merely harmless unsolicited art is stunningly obtuse. Mosqueda wouldn’t hold the position if she found a pro-life graffiti message on her property.

Like Socialist Kshama Sawant calling the police she tried to defund when poop was thrown at her home, Mosqueda would get the “unsolicited art” removed from her property within hours and would likely demand a police investigation.

In fairness to Mosqueda, if her council office were tagged at City Hall, she wouldn’t clean it up. Not out of her principled stance against giving tax dollars to for-profit graffiti cleaners, of course. After all, Mosqueda doesn’t go to the office to work. She is still using COVID rules to work from home in her pajamas. She wouldn’t even see the tagging.

Nevertheless, the graffiti that Harrell seeks to clean up isn’t art. Murals are art. Tagging gang signs express one’s commitment to violence and intimidation.

Equity agenda at work

A left-wing equity movement informs Mosqueda and Nunn’s positions.

Taggers, whether or not in a gang, are typically youth. Progressives do not want to punish the youth because they think young people, especially racial minorities, are victims of a white supremacist criminal justice system. And they argue that entering the criminal justice system only leads to worse outcomes. Sometimes that’s true.

But activists, like Mosqueda, believe the criminal justice system is *literally* never the answer. It’s what keeps dangerous, violent kids on the streets reoffending. Punitive measures can stop a teen’s criminal activity from escalating.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Immediate police crisis: new officer training
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/11/14/police-training-brutality-perf-report/
GIST	<p>Public outrage over how police use force has fueled protests in the streets, spurred calls to cut their funding and ignited broad debates over how to reform law enforcement.</p> <p>Despite this intense focus on the present and future of policing, one key component has remained woefully inadequate, according to a report from a prominent policing think tank: how new officers are trained.</p> <p>Training for recruits “presents an immediate crisis for policing,” according to the report from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a copy of which was provided to The Washington Post before its scheduled release Monday.</p> <p>The report describes a system that, even after years of push and pull over change, is “built to train officers quickly and cheaply.” That system then hurries the new officers onto streets across the United States</p>

without helping them develop vital skills, including crisis intervention and communication, that they will need on the job, according to the report.

[Police nationwide](#) have faced criticism over [how officers use force](#), with unrest and protests following cases in Cleveland, New York, Baton Rouge, Louisville, Atlanta and Ferguson, Mo., among other places. The new analysis of training is based in part on a survey of hundreds of law enforcement leaders conducted in 2020, during a period that encompassed the beginning of [the coronavirus pandemic](#); the death of [George Floyd, a Black man](#), at the hands of police in Minneapolis; and the ensuing [wave of nationwide protests](#) against police brutality amid a broader racial reckoning.

Policing has changed over the years, seizing on new technologies and adopting approaches including [“community policing,”](#) the report said, while officers are facing difficult challenges, among them increasingly powerful guns on the streets and people in crisis. But far too often, the report said, police are trained “to be warriors, even though their agencies and communities expect them also to be guardians, social workers, and community partners.”

Changing American policing, the report said, means starting with how new officers are instructed and embracing new approaches instead of holding on to outdated concepts.

“Do I think it’s changed in some places? Yes,” Chuck Wexler, the executive director of PERF, said of police training. “But do I think there’s been fundamental changes since the George Floyd murder? No.”

In a Washington Post-ABC News [poll](#) last year, more than half of respondents said they doubted police were adequately trained to avoid using excessive force. The new PERF report and some law enforcement experts say that training has improved in some ways, including an increase in how much time police are instructed, but that overall practices have not changed dramatically, owing to a combination of factors including a reliance on past practices and inertia.

Much like policing itself — which is scattered among more than 15,000 local departments and sheriff’s offices, [most of them small agencies](#) — training varies from place to place, with different requirements and obligations.

State commissions typically set their own standards for training, the report said, creating “vast differences” between the academies in different states, including how many hours they teach and the material presented. There are an estimated 700 or 800 police training academies nationwide, according to the PERF report, so “recruit training is splintered and inconsistent.” The report said nearly half of the academies are operated by colleges or technical schools, while a third are operated by local law enforcement agencies themselves.

In Dallas, the police academy lasts nine months and offers courses in interview techniques, asset forfeiture and foot pursuits; after the academy, the new officers spend six months in field training. Miami police undergo a six-month police academy program, while in Oklahoma City, the 28-week police academy includes instruction on constitutional law, self-defense and de-escalation, before recruits spend four to six months dispatched to field training.

In Atlanta, potential recruits are warned that the police academy could pose “the most challenging academic, emotional, physical and psychological undertaking you have ever experienced.”

The PERF report said police academies often devote a lot of time to preparing officers for dangerous encounters, including with armed people. While that is “critically important,” the report said, it is also vital for officers to learn skills such as how to communicate and engage with the community, things they will need “day-in and day-out for the routine encounters that will occupy the vast majority of their time.”

The report included other recommendations such as calling for a set of national standards and for departments to devote more money to training, which accounted for a fraction of the police budgets among agencies that responded to PERF’s survey. The report also calls for recruits to be taught more about the

history of policing nationwide and locally “with a special emphasis on racial justice issues,” saying recruits need to learn how this history can “shape perceptions of the police today.”

Police instruction has changed over time, including the increase in hours spent in training, the report said. But that volume of training still falls short when compared with people in other jobs in the United States or police in other countries, the report said.

Police in the United States typically spend about 20 weeks in the academy, the report said, while recruits in Japan might spend up to 21 months training. Their peers in many European countries spend two to three years training.

“Look, it’s expensive to train someone for a year,” Wexler said. “But it’s far more expensive to not train them properly and see a situation handled badly. It can absolutely devastate a department and a city.”

Just ramping up the amount of training, Wexler said, is not the solution, even though that is often floated by officials amid controversies like uses of force.

“When police have faced a crisis, the conventional recommendation is inevitably more training,” Wexler said. “The reality is that more training may not necessarily be the answer to what the issue is.”

The report said there has not been enough research into what training actually works, calling on policing to invest in more to figure out “what works and what doesn’t in police recruit training.”

Ian Adams, a professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of South Carolina, said he believes the training offered today is better than it used to be, but he said it is important to understand what types of training work best.

“I know it’s tempting to say, well, if we just put officers through 10 more hours of X training, then we should get Y results,” said Adams, a former police officer.

But, he said, “the evidence doesn’t say that. Because we haven’t put the necessary resources into understanding what training would actually accomplish the outcomes we want.”

The PERF report said training academies should avoid taking a “paramilitary approach,” potentially merge with others to create consistency in what new officers are taught, and welcome input from members of the community, among other suggested changes.

The report also touches on why, despite all the pleas to rethink policing, training remains behind the times in many places. “At many academies,” the report said, instruction “is based largely on what has been taught in the past.” New laws, department policies and other practices in law enforcement, the report said, are not always added promptly to the instruction.

In many cases, the report continued, academies “seem to rely almost exclusively on current or retired law enforcement officers to develop their training curricula,” even though these people lack backgrounds in designing course instruction.

David J. Thomas, a retired Florida police officer, said he feels like “there’s still not enough” instruction for new officers. Police get trained in things like how to use firearms and defensive tactics, Thomas said, but the instruction falls short when it comes to things like how to treat members of the community or respond to people in crisis.

“I don’t think the curriculum’s changed enough to meet the needs of the people that we’re serving,” said Thomas, a professor at Florida Gulf Coast University.

[Return to Top](#)

SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/14/joe-biden-pushes-engagement-xi-jinping-ails-new-er/
GIST	<p>President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping presented sharply diverging views on the future of U.S.-Chinese relations during three hours of closed-door talks Monday. The dynamic of the meeting, preceded by a warm handshake, quickly became clear: The American president sought a return to greater bilateral engagement while the Chinese leader bluntly warned the United States to back off and not to cross its “red lines” regarding Taiwan and other issues.</p> <p>According to the official White House readout, Mr. Biden emphasized avoiding conflict with what critics say in an increasingly aggressive China. The message: Washington does not want a “new cold war” in Asia and is seeking to turn down the temperature through more talks and reengagement aimed at easing tensions.</p> <p>Mr. Xi said the world is facing a historical turning point and demanded that the United States accept China’s communist system and his drive to rejuvenate the nation.</p> <p>The Chinese leader bluntly warned the United States that resolving differences about Taiwan remains a flashpoint for a potential conflict, the Chinese government said in a statement.</p> <p>According to post-meeting statements from both sides, the talks were notable at times for the issues that were not raised, including topics that might have made the Chinese leader uncomfortable. Neither the U.S. nor Chinese statements mentioned whether the talks addressed the controversy over China’s role in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and Beijing’s years-long stonewalling of international investigations into finding the virus’ origin.</p> <p>China’s large-scale military buildup — in particular, the rapid expansion of its nuclear missile arsenal — also was not mentioned as a topic of discussion during some three hours of talks on the sidelines of an economic summit in Bali, Indonesia.</p> <p>World events beyond the bilateral relationship also clouded the meeting. The commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, Adm. Charles Richard, said this month that the Russia-Ukraine war could be a prelude to a major conflict with China over Taiwan.</p> <p>According to the White House, Mr. Xi and Mr. Biden agreed that nuclear war should not be fought and cannot be won. They also opposed threats by Russia to use nuclear arms in Ukraine.</p> <p>“President Biden explained that the United States will continue to compete vigorously with the PRC, including by investing in sources of strength at home and aligning efforts with allies and partners around the world,” the White House said in a readout statement of the talks using the acronym for People’s Republic of China. Mr. Biden told the Chinese leader that U.S.-China competition must not “veer into conflict” and should be managed and discussed through open lines of communications.</p> <p>During a post-meeting press conference, Mr. Biden said tensions should not lead to a new cold war.</p> <p>“We were candid and clear with one another across the board,” Mr. Biden said. “And I do not think there’s any imminent attempt on the part of China to invade Taiwan.” U.S. policy toward Taiwan “had not changed at all,” he insisted.</p> <p>Mr. Biden has said on four occasions that the United States would defend Taiwan from a Chinese attack, a policy suggested by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act.</p> <p>“I made it clear that we want to see cross-strait issues peacefully resolved ... and I’m convinced that he understood exactly what I was saying. I understood what he was saying.”</p> <p>Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Beijing in the future for talks on cooperating with China, the White House said. In one bit of news, Mr. Xi and Mr. Biden said they were authorizing a regular high-</p>

level dialogue through a number of issue working groups — contacts that China had cut off as tensions over Taiwan rose.

Sharp shift

U.S.-Chinese relations shifted sharply during the Trump administration. That administration jettisoned decades-long policies of engaging China economically and politically while ignoring Beijing's cyberespionage, increased military expansion in the South China Sea and toward Taiwan and Japan, and support for rogue states such as North Korea.

Despite some pre-election expectations, Mr. Biden has retained and even expanded many of the Trump administration's hard-line policies toward China. Yet he and his aides have always insisted that they also favor greater cooperation with Beijing on issues of mutual interest such as climate change.

China cut off bilateral climate talks after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August. In response to the visit, China's military held its largest war games in decades around the island, which included firing nearly a dozen ballistic missiles into nearby waters.

In September, the administration said it would continue Trump-era tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese imported goods pending a review.

At times, Mr. Xi played the role of the aggrieved party, arguing that U.S. moves on such issues as Taiwan, trade and economic decoupling were the primary causes of rising tensions. The Chinese leader told the U.S. president that current relations fail to "conform to the fundamental interests of the two countries and the two peoples."

Mr. Xi warned that the United States needs to "explore the correct way for the two countries to get along in the new era" — a reference to China's increasing global power and influence.

He said bilateral ties need to be pushed "back to the track of healthy and stable development."

Describing Taiwan as the "core of China's core interests," Mr. Xi said the issue is the "first insurmountable red line" in U.S.-Chinese relations. "Solving the Taiwan issue is the Chinese people's own business and China's internal affairs," Mr. Xi told Mr. Biden, according to an official readout statement. "Anyone who wants to split Taiwan from China is against China's national justice, and the Chinese people will never agree!"

Mr. Xi said China hopes to maintain peace and stability on the 100-mile-wide Taiwan Strait but warned that formal independence by the island state is incompatible with peace and stability.

Lyle Goldstein, director of Asia engagement for the group Defense Priorities, said the meeting statements showed a dramatic divergence of policies on Taiwan and Ukraine.

"On the former, the U.S. emphasized an agreement that nuclear weapons should not be used, while the Chinese readout didn't mention nuclear weapons, stating simply that 'there are no winners,'" Mr. Goldstein said.

"On Taiwan, Biden raised objections to China's 'increasingly aggressive actions' against Taiwan. Xi countered by describing Taiwan as China's internal affair and a 'core interest,' explicitly using the term 'red line' to suggest China is willing to risk conflict over Taiwan."

The Chinese leader also defended the Chinese communist system, which he claimed is a "democracy" supported by China's 1.4 billion people and one the U.S. should not try to change.

“These differences didn’t begin today, and they will continue into tomorrow and beyond,” he said. “One of the most important things in the relationship between China and the United States is to recognize and respect this difference.”

Mr. Xi said accepting the differences in the two systems is one of the most important aspects of the bilateral ties, “rather than forcing the same, trying to change or even subvert each other’s system.”

Congressional reception

How Mr. Biden’s restrained rhetoric and calls for greater cooperation will play on Capitol Hill is uncertain. Support for Taiwan and taking a tough line on Beijing enjoy strong bilateral support in Congress.

“Joe Biden has again failed to address or even acknowledge China’s Cold War against the United States,” said Sen. Tom Cotton, Arkansas Republican. “His naive return to a policy of appeasement will hurt the United States, endanger Taiwan, and further embolden Xi Jinping.”

Sen. Marco Rubio, Florida Republican, added: “President Biden’s claim that ‘there need not be a new Cold War’ between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party proves that this administration dangerously misunderstands the CCP, which openly pushes for conflict with the United States and its allies.”

Mr. Biden and senior aides, including Mr. Blinken and White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, have said after earlier meetings with the Chinese that the United States will not seek to overthrow China’s communist system.

Mr. Biden did criticize Chinese military coercion against Taiwan, according to the U.S. readout of the meeting.

The president “raised U.S. objections to [China’s] coercive and increasingly aggressive actions toward Taiwan, which undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the broader region, and jeopardize global prosperity,” the statement said.

Mr. Biden also raised China’s human rights abuses in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong.

The State Department has declared China to be engaged in genocide against minority Uyghurs and others in Xinjiang, where more than 1 million people have been detained in concentration camps.

China has denied the claims, supported recently by the United Nations, and said the camps are for reeducating Uyghurs.

At times, the Chinese leader’s comments at the meeting sounded like North Korean propaganda.

The Chinese readout said Mr. Xi presented the results of the recent Chinese Communist Party congress that will “fully promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with Chinese-style modernization, continue to take the realization of the people’s yearning for a better life as the starting point, unswervingly carry out reform and opening up, and promote the building of an open world economy.”

Mr. Xi said China’s foreign policy is peaceful and advocates for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

“China will adhere to peaceful development, open development, and win-win development, be a participant and promoter of global development, and work with other countries to achieve common development,” the statement said.

David Stilwell, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs during the Trump administration, said Mr. Biden’s emphasis on personally meeting with Mr. Xi is a key misunderstanding.

	<p>“Dialogue is not going to change PRC behavior. They have said as much to themselves,” Mr. Stilwell said.</p> <p>“Their goal is to defeat liberal democracy. It’s a direct threat to their authoritarian ideology,” he said.</p> <p>“There is no room for cooperation with the PRC. The constant begging for climate and military-to-military dialogue sends a message of fear and weakness.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Federal court blocks student debt program
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/14/federal-appeals-court-blocks-bidens-student-debt-p/
GIST	<p>A federal appeals court on Monday blocked President Biden’s student-loan forgiveness program, dealing a second serious blow to the plan, which already had been declared unconstitutional by a Texas court.</p> <p>A three-judge panel for the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis granted a preliminary injunction at the request of six Republican-led states that argued the program threatens future tax revenues and bucks Congress’ authority to cancel loans.</p> <p>The six-page ruling did not decide the program’s legal merit but rather imposed a nationwide hold on the program pending an appeal of a lower court ruling that allowed the debt-relief plan to go forward.</p> <p>In the decision, the judges said they could not limit the injunction to the plaintiff states because that would create widespread uncertainty. The judges concluded the program was too unwieldy to limit to the six states that challenged it.</p> <p>“The equities strongly favor an injunction considering the irreversible impact [the administration’s] debt forgiveness action would have as compared to the lack of harm an injunction would presently impose,” the judges wrote.</p> <p>The ruling is a major defeat for the administration and the more than 26 million Americans who applied to cancel billions of dollars in outstanding student loans.</p> <p>White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre vowed to appeal the Eighth Circuit’s decision.</p> <p>“We are confident in our legal authority for the student debt relief program and believe it is necessary to help borrowers most in need as they recover from the pandemic,” she said in a statement. “The administration will continue to fight these baseless lawsuits by Republican officials and special interests and will never stop fighting to support working and middle class Americans.”</p> <p>A federal judge originally rejected the challenge brought by the six states — Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas and South Carolina — saying they lacked the standing to pursue the case.</p> <p>But the appeals court concluded Monday that Missouri had shown a likely injury from the program, noting that a major loan servicer headquartered in the state — the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority — would lose revenue under the Biden administration plan.</p> <p>The Missouri Treasury Department receives revenue from the loan authority.</p> <p>“Since at least one party likely has standing, we need not address the standing of the other states,” the 8th Circuit said.</p> <p>The Biden administration can appeal the injunction to the U.S. Supreme Court.</p> <p>It’s the second decision by a federal court blocking the program over the past few days.</p>

A U.S. District Court in Texas on Thursday concluded in a different case that the program was unlawful because the authority to vacate student loans lies with Congress. The Biden administration has already appealed that ruling.

Mr. Biden's plan, which is now on life support following the back-to-back court rulings, would cancel up to \$20,000 in federal student debt if a borrower received a Pell Grant. Borrowers without a Pell Grant are eligible for up to \$10,000 relief.

It is estimated that more than 30 million could reduce their student debt through the plan.

The average student loan balance is currently more than \$30,000.

In its ruling, the 8th Circuit panel said it is aware of the case's potential impact.

"Whatever the eventual outcome of this case, it will affect the finances of millions of Americans with student loan debt as well as those Americans who pay taxes to finance the government and indeed everyone who is affected by such far-reaching fiscal decisions," the panel said in its ruling.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Border numbers continue to set records
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/14/homeland-security-claims-progress-border-numbers-cl/
GIST	<p>Border Patrol agents nabbed more than 204,000 illegal immigrants at the southern border last month, setting a new record for the month of October — though officials said they had made some progress.</p> <p>After announcing a new get-tough policy on Venezuelan migrants, officials said their number dropped from 1,100 a day to about 300 a day.</p> <p>But Cubans and Nicaraguans have surged, accounting for nearly 50,000 of the Border Patrol apprehensions.</p> <p>"This reflects the challenge that is gripping the hemisphere, as displaced populations flee authoritarianism, corruption, violence and poverty," said Troy Miller, acting commissioner at Customs and Border Protection.</p> <p>CBP released the October numbers just before midnight Monday, hours before Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas was slated to begin several days of testimony on Capitol Hill.</p> <p>The numbers also came days after President Biden ousted Chris Magnus, CBP's commissioner, blaming him for the ongoing chaos.</p> <p>The Border Patrol recorded 204,273 total apprehensions along the U.S.-Mexico boundary.</p> <p>CBP officers reported 26,405 more encounters with unauthorized migrants at the ports of entry, more than 3,000 of them being Russians.</p> <p>Border Patrol agents reported nabbing nine migrants whose identities were flagged in the government's terrorist screening database. That's a dip from September, but still marks a continuation of the record pace in the Biden administration.</p> <p>CBP's fentanyl seizures rose slightly, while methamphetamine and heroin seizures were down. Cocaine seizures more than doubled for the month.</p> <p>Officials believe that when seizures go up, more drugs are sneaking through.</p>

	<p>Almost all of the fentanyl was seized coming through the official ports of entry. Immigrant-rights advocates say that shows fentanyl should not be considered an immigration issue.</p> <p>The Washington Times reported earlier this month on some of the October numbers, including nearly 87,000 “gotaways” — those whom the Border Patrol detected coming across but knows weren’t apprehended.</p> <p>In parts of Arizona, agents say they missed roughly as many migrants as they managed to catch.</p> <p>The “gotaways” make it tougher to evaluate the official apprehension numbers, though CBP did celebrate the progress with Venezuelans.</p> <p>More than 33,000 were caught entering in September, but those numbers dropped to 22,044 in October. At the start of the month, Homeland Security announced a new program to welcome a relatively small number of Venezuelans who applied from outside the U.S. — and said those who showed up without going through that process would be expelled back into Mexico.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/15 China Covid curbs fuel unrest
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/15/covid-curbs-fuel-unrest-in-southern-chinese-city-video-shows
GIST	<p>Crowds of people in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou crashed through Covid barriers and marched down streets in chaotic scenes on Monday night, according to videos posted online, in a show of public resentment over government restrictions.</p> <p>Among the latest outbreaks in China, Guangzhou has the biggest caseload, with new daily infections of Covid-19 exceeding 5,000 for the first time and fuelling speculation that localised lockdowns could widen.</p> <p>Videos posted and widely shared on Twitter, which Reuters could not independently verify, showed noisy scenes in Haizhu district of people charging down streets and remonstrating with workers in hazmat suits.</p> <p>Several hashtags related to the topic of “riots” in the area were scrubbed from China’s Weibo microblogging site by Tuesday morning. Twitter is blocked in China.</p> <p>Neither the Guangzhou city government nor the Guangdong provincial police responded to requests for comment.</p> <p>On Tuesday, authorities reported 17,772 new local Covid-19 infections for 14 November, up from 16,072 a day earlier and the most since April, even as many cities scaled back routine testing after authorities announced measures last week aimed at easing the impact of heavy coronavirus curbs.</p> <p>In Beijing, new infections hit a record high of 462 for Monday, up from 407 a day earlier. Big cities including Chongqing and Zhengzhou were among the worst hit.</p> <p>Still, China is scrambling to limit the damage of its zero-Covid policy nearly three years into the pandemic, as the latest in a spate of dismal economic reports showed retail sales fell in October and factory output grew more slowly than expected.</p> <p>While many residents have expressed guarded optimism after Friday’s announcement that some of the stringent Covid policies would be eased, concerns grew this week over the worsening outbreaks and there was confusion as some cities halted or adjusted regular testing.</p> <p>Monday night’s scenes in Guangzhou were the latest outpouring of frustration over the restrictions, which have included frequent lockdowns and enforced quarantines under a policy that China says saves lives.</p>

Last month, a Covid outbreak at a massive Foxconn plant in Zhengzhou led to chaos, with many workers fleeing – including by climbing fences – and disrupting production.

In Guangzhou, home to nearly 19 million people, rising case numbers have fuelled speculation that a handful of district-level lockdowns could be expanded.

“The infection curve of Guangzhou is tracking the pace of Shanghai’s March-April outbreak, raising the question of whether a city-wide lockdown will be triggered,” JPMorgan analysts wrote, referring to Shanghai’s two-month lockdown this year, which sparked widespread unrest.

“It would become a testing point regarding the government’s determination to push for the relaxation of Covid control measures,” they said.

The investment bank estimates that cities with more than 10 new cumulative cases in the past week are home to 780 million people and account for 62.2% of GDP – roughly triple the levels seen at the end of September.

Under China’s new rules, testing efforts are to be more targeted, easing what has been a significant financial burden on cities.

On Monday, Beijing’s most populous district, Chaoyang, moved some testing sites closer to residential compounds. While that increased the overall number of sites, it also led to long waiting times for many, fuelling frustration since many workplaces and other venues still require negative test results from within 24 hours.

On Weibo, a hashtag on testing-booth closures was flooded with critical comments on Monday night before being censored. “What are working people supposed to do?” wrote one user. Another asked: “What kind of brain came up with this policy?”

On Tuesday, the state broadcaster, CCTV, said Chaoyang was adding more testing sites, including near offices.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 NYC: e-bike batteries behind 200 fires
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/nov/14/new-york-e-bike-batteries-fires-delivery-workers
GIST	<p>New York City delivery workers have to deal with an array of threats: speeding cars, volatile weather, armed robbers and app algorithms that can “deactivate” them if they don’t rush to customers quickly enough. Lately, workers have added another to the list – their electric bikes bursting into flames.</p> <p>The powerful lithium ion batteries used in small electric vehicles are responsible for a growing epidemic of fires. This year, there have been about 200 fires and six deaths, according to the New York City fire department. This month, an e-bike fire inside a Manhattan high-rise apartment became an inferno that injured nearly 40 people and forced firefighters to evacuate residents using ropes.</p> <p>These fires can spread quickly and suddenly: “We have a fully formed fire within a matter of seconds,” the chief fire marshal said at a news conference.</p> <p>That’s become a daily concern for delivery workers such as Delores Sampson, a 64-year-old Brooklyn resident who has been working for Uber Eats for about two years to subsidize her social security benefits. Sampson said she “lives in fear” that her vehicle might catch fire while it’s charging or even while she’s riding it. Last year, while delivering food on her mobility scooter, Sampson hit a pothole, causing the battery to fly out and hit the pavement, where it burst into flames. “It was like a big popping sound,” she told the Guardian. “It scared me – like, ‘Damn, if that would’ve happened on the bike, I would’ve been blown up.’”</p>

As the densest city in America, New York is a micro-mobility haven. Here, small electric vehicles aren't toys for weekend jaunts but vital tools for the estimated 65,000 delivery workers trying to scrape a living through low-paying apps.

There are thousands of choices today if you want an e-bike, e-scooter or e-moped. Some of the high-end, name-brand machines are sold in beautiful downtown showrooms for well over \$5,000. But many of the vehicles used by New York City's workers come from unknown manufacturers and are sold online or through small shops for between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

Nearly all of these vehicles are powered by lithium ion battery packs, which contain tightly bundled cells that store energy as flammable chemicals. Typically, the cells are kept in sync by a piece of electronic circuitry called a battery management system, or BMS, which makes sure that the cells don't overcharge or release too much energy at once. But that careful balance can get disrupted due to damage, wear, or faulty manufacturing, sometimes with dangerous results.

In August, a lithium ion battery fire that erupted after 2am killed a child and her mother in their Harlem apartment. A big reason the fires keep happening is that workers have few options to charge their vehicles. Many charge their batteries in their own apartments and hope for the best. Others rent a spot from one of Manhattan's e-bike stores, where shops charge dozens of batteries next to each other on makeshift racks. Some people strike up deals with their neighborhood bodegas.

Sampson, who lives on the third floor of a brownstone, is afraid to charge her battery indoors. So she uses two extension cords plugged into one another, dangling nearly 50ft to her bike parked in the building's front yard – which she knows is still a risk. "Sometimes you might fall asleep and then it's the next day, and thank God the battery didn't explode or anything."

Gustavo Ajche, the founder of Los Deliveristas Unidos, a prominent delivery worker labor group, told the Guardian he uses a parking space inside a private garage that the garage has set up as a charging station. Ajche splits the space with about 20 other workers and has to pay \$150 a month for his share. "We try to do our best to keep our batteries in good shape because everybody is scared," he said.

Lawmakers are worried too. The authority that manages New York's public housing proposed an e-bike ban on its property this year but backed down after an outcry from low-income residents. On Monday, the city council held a hearing where legislators touted bills to combat the battery fires, including a proposal to outlaw the sale of secondhand electric vehicle batteries, and another to ban all batteries that haven't been approved by a nationally recognized testing lab.

If passed, that measure would force riders to use batteries such as those certified by the Illinois-based Underwriters Laboratory (UL), which subjects e-bikes and their batteries to rigorous testing on issues ranging from their performance under extreme temperatures to how easily fire spreads between cells. Manufacturers have to pay a "nominal" cost to undergo testing, said Robert Slone, UL's chief scientist, but "we see a lot of manufacturers showing interest in certifying the batteries". UL sent a statement to the city council supporting the proposed measures, though it said a total ban on used batteries could be overkill: "When done correctly, batteries can be safely repurposed."

Some of the most highly regarded e-bike batteries are the UL-certified batteries and motors made by Bosch, which a spokesperson said "are designed for daily use" and "will meet the daily demands of delivery workers". But Bosch batteries are only found in higher-end bike brands that are out of reach for many delivery workers.

That's why workers say what's needed from the city isn't just new restrictions but more assistance.

For more than a year, Los Deliveristas Unidos has been pushing for the creation of new bike charging hubs in New York's high-traffic areas. The workers scored a major victory in October, when Senator Chuck Schumer pledged \$1m in federal infrastructure funding to launch the project in New York City, starting with the conversion of an unused downtown newsstand. The Deliveristas have also proposed

creating compact solar-powered charging stations in parking spaces outside popular restaurants. But Ajche said the organization doesn't expect to see the first hub up and running until next summer. "Working with the city's not easy," he said. "Everything takes a lot of time."

Sampson has joined an informal group called Safer Charging, which advocates creating a "battery swap" network modeled after similar systems in countries such as Taiwan. That would allow workers to put their spent battery packs into shared outdoor charging cabinets and grab new ones, leaving the maintenance of the batteries to a professional team.

Something else that would make a big difference for workers is better intel. "Each fire happened, they say it's an e-bike, but we don't know which one it is," Ajche said. "There's a lot of missing information." What would be more useful, he said, would be if the fire department committed resources to testing and sharing details about which batteries were safe to use, so that workers could make more informed decisions.

Ajche added that the city should pass laws requiring that gig companies pay delivery workers a "living wage". According to Los Deliveristas, that would be \$30 an hour, an amount that would help offset delivery workers' substantial equipment and maintenance costs, especially if they're required to upgrade their batteries down the line. "You already have to invest almost \$4,000 to be a delivery worker," he said. "And if they're regulating the types of batteries, the price of everything is gonna get so high."

Uber and Doordash did not respond to questions about whether they would increase payments to workers hoping to buy certified e-bike batteries. But an Uber spokesperson provided a statement that it sent to the city council in support of the new proposals. "Nobody one should have to choose between their safety and their livelihood," the statement said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Day 265 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/15/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-265-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, has said Russian troops have "destroyed absolutely all critical infrastructure" in Kherson. "There is no electricity, no communication, no internet, no television ... Russian occupiers destroyed absolutely all critical infrastructure for the people," he said in his Monday evening address. Ukrainian national energy company Ukrenergo said Russia also destroyed key energy infrastructure in the region. "The energy facility that provided power supply to the entire right bank of the Kherson region and a significant part of the Mykolaiv region, is practically destroyed," Ukrenergo chief Volodymyr Kudrytskyi said.• Zelenskiy made a surprise visit to Kherson on Monday, saying the recapture of the southern city marked "the beginning of the end of the war". "We are moving forward. We are ready for peace, peace for all our country," he said. Zelenskiy said it was important to visit Kherson to show residents his support and to demonstrate that "we are really returning, we really raise our flag". He said: "I'm really happy, you can tell by the reaction of the people, their reaction is not staged."• The US believes that Russian troops carried out a relatively orderly withdrawal from the city of Kherson, a senior US military official said on Monday, in contrast to some of the more chaotic retreats in the country. "We assess that it was a relatively orderly withdrawal," the official spoke on the condition of anonymity, according to a Reuters report.• According to Russian media, the Ukrainian army has entered the city of Herois'ke, in the Kinburn peninsula in the southern part of Kherson, after an amphibious operation, as heavy fighting continues across the region.• The United Nations General Assembly has called for Russia to make reparations to Ukraine and be held accountable for its conduct. The assembly voted to approve a resolution on Monday, supported by 94 of the assembly's 193 members, saying Russia "must bear the legal consequences of all of its internationally wrongful acts, including making reparation for the injury, including any damage, caused by such acts." The resolution also recommends that member states,

in cooperation with Ukraine, create an international register to record evidence and claims against Russia.

- **The US president, Joe Biden, and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, have reiterated their agreement that a nuclear war “should never be fought”,** the White House said. [Beijing’s readout](#) from the long-awaited meeting in Bali differed slightly and did not mention the pair agreeing on opposing Russia’s threat of using nuclear weapons in the Ukraine war. However, on Sunday, Chinese premier Li Keqiang emphasised the “irresponsibility” of nuclear threats, suggesting China was uncomfortable with Russia’s nuclear rhetoric, a senior US official said.
- **Zelenskiy welcomed statements from the US and China.** “This is a grouping of very weighty states. And today, on the eve of the summit, weighty statements have already been made,” he said in his Monday night video address. “In particular, it is important that the United States and China jointly highlighted that the threats of using nuclear weapons were unacceptable. Everyone understands to whom these words are addressed.”
- **CIA director, Bill Burns, met his Russian counterpart in Turkey on Monday to talk about “the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons by Russia”** in a rare high-level meeting, US officials said. The meeting in Ankara with the head of Russia’s SVR foreign intelligence service, Sergei Naryshkin, followed speculation that some senior US figures would like Ukraine to enter negotiations with the Kremlin to end the war. Officials insisted the US is not engaged in secret peace talks with Moscow without Ukrainian officials being present.
- **Rishi Sunak has called Russia a “pariah state”** on the eve of his first meeting of the G20 in Indonesia, where he has vowed to confront Moscow’s representative in public and on the sidelines of the summit. The UK prime minister said he would take every opportunity during the summit to confront Russia’s foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, attending in [Vladimir Putin’s absence](#). “Russia is becoming a pariah state and he’s [Putin] not there to take responsibility for what he’s doing,” Sunak told reporters.
- **The EU and its member states have so far provided weapons and military equipment worth a total of at least €8bn (£7bn) to Ukraine,** [according to the bloc’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell](#).
- **A former Russian prison inmate, who defected to Ukraine after being recruited by the Kremlin-linked private military group Wagner, was reportedly executed and repeatedly struck** with a sledgehammer. Footage of the summary killing of Yevgeny Nuzhin was posted over the weekend by the Wagner-linked Telegram channel Grey Zone.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Key takeaways Biden, Xi meeting
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/14/five-key-takeaways-from-biden-and-xis-first-meeting-as-leaders
GIST	<p>At the G20 summit in Bali, Joe Biden and Xi Jinping held their first ever face-to-meeting as leaders, in an attempt to reduce tensions over Taiwan and trade that have sent US-China ties to their lowest level in decades. Here are the five key takeaways:</p> <p>Biden had a cold but Xi still shook his hand China’s leader is notoriously Covid paranoid, but it did not stop him from shaking Biden’s hand despite the US leader having a mild cold. The close contact, as well as smiles for the cameras, illustrated that the two leaders intend to show they want a better working relationship.</p> <p>In veiled criticism, Xi said bilateral relations failed to meet “the fundamental interests” of the two countries and the global expectations. However, he said the leaders of the two superpowers should act as a ship’s rudder and “chart the right course” and “elevate the relationship”.</p> <p>Biden told China its Taiwan policy was ‘aggressive’ ... Despite the smiles, the US president brought up several contentious issues during the three-hour meeting, according to a White House readout.</p>

The most thorny topic he raised was US objections to China's "coercive and increasingly aggressive actions" towards [Taiwan](#), which he said undermined peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and jeopardised global prosperity.

Xi told Biden that the Taiwan question was at the "very core of China's core interests" and the "first red line" in bilateral ties that must not be crossed.

China has blamed the US for initiating discord. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said last week: "The root cause of the tensions in the Taiwan Strait is that the Taiwan authorities have been soliciting US support to seek 'Taiwan independence'."

... but he kept to Washington's longstanding stance on Taiwan

Biden reassured China that the US commitment to the "[One China](#)" policy had not changed, after the Chinese foreign ministry last week told the US to "stop fudging, distorting and hollowing out the One China principle" and insinuated that the US was attempting to contain China using the Taiwan issue as a pretext.

Climate cooperation might resume in some form

The leaders said they would "empower key senior officials" on areas of potential cooperation, including tackling the climate crisis, and maintaining global financial, health and food stability."

However, it was not immediately clear if that meant China would agree to restart climate change talks [it had paused in protest](#) at a controversial visit to Taiwan by the US House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, in August.

Moscow's nuclear threats have worried Beijing and Washington

According to the US statement, the leaders also agreed that "a nuclear war should never be fought" and could not be won, "and underscored their opposition to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine".

The comments come weeks after Vladimir Putin [threatened nuclear retaliation](#) in a serious escalation of the Ukraine war.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 DOT: airlines to refund \$600M to flyers
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/nation-world/us-says-airlines-to-refund-more-than-600-million-to-flyers-frontier-airlines-4-foreign-carriers-trips-canceled-significantly-delayed-since-start-of-pandemic-department-of-transportation#
GIST	<p>Frontier Airlines and four foreign carriers have agreed to refund more than \$600 million combined to travelers whose trips were canceled or significantly delayed since the start of the pandemic, federal officials said Monday.</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Transportation said it also fined the same airlines more than \$7 million for delaying refunds so long that they violated consumer-protection rules.</p> <p>The largest U.S. airlines, which accounted for the bulk of complaints about refunds, avoided fines, and an official said no other U.S. carriers are being investigated for potential fines.</p> <p>Consumers flooded the agency with thousands of complaints about their inability to get refunds when the airlines canceled huge numbers of flights after the pandemic hit the U.S. in early 2020. It was by far the leading category of complaints.</p> <p>"When Americans buy a ticket on an airline, we expect to get to our destination safely, reliably and affordably, and our job at DOT is to hold airlines accountable for these expectations," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said.</p>

The department said Denver-based Frontier Airlines is refunding \$222 million and paying a \$2.2 million civil penalty.

TAP Portugal will refund \$126.5 million and pay a \$1.1 million fine; Air India will pay \$121.5 million in refunds and a \$1.4 million penalty; Aeromexico will pay \$13.6 million and a \$900,000 fine; Israel's El Al will pay \$61.9 million and a \$900,000 penalty; and Colombia's Avianca will pay \$76.8 million and a \$750,000 fine, the Transportation Department said.

"We have more enforcement actions and investigations underway and there may be more news to come by way of fines," Buttigieg said during a call with reporters.

However, there will be no fines for other U.S. airlines because they responded "shortly after" the Transportation Department reminded them in April 2020 of their obligation to provide quick refunds, said Blane Workie, the assistant general counsel for the Transportation Department's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection.

"We do not have any pending cases against other U.S. carriers. Our remaining cases are against foreign air carriers," Workie said on the same call with Buttigieg.

In 2020, United Airlines had the most refund-related complaints filed with DOT — more than 10,000. Air Canada, El Al and TAP Portugal were next, both over 5,000, followed by American Airlines and Frontier, both topping 4,000.

Air Canada agreed last year to pay \$4.5 million to settle similar U.S. allegations of slow refunds. The Transportation Department initially sought \$25.5 million in that case.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Another union rejects freight railroads deal
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/nation-world/another-union-rejects-deal-with-nations-freight-railroads-strike-congress-president-joe-biden-union-pacific-norfolk-southern-kansas-city-marty-walsh-department-of-labor-brotherhood-of-maintenance-of-way-employees-division#
GIST	<p>OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A third railroad union has rejected its agreement with the nation's freight railroads, increasing the chances that Congress may be called upon to settle the dispute and block a strike.</p> <p>The small International Brotherhood of Boilermakers union on Monday voted down the contract even though it includes the biggest raises workers have seen in more than four decades. The union represents just a few hundred of the roughly 115,000 rail workers involved in the contract dispute with Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, BNSF, Kansas City Southern, CSX and other railroads.</p> <p>All 12 rail unions must approve their deals to prevent a strike, although no strike is imminent because all the unions have agreed to keep negotiating even if their members vote no, until a deadline early next month.</p> <p>Seven other unions have ratified the five-year deals that include 24% raises and \$5,000 in bonuses. The focus now is on the three unions that have voted down their agreements and the remaining two that haven't finished voting.</p> <p>Workers' quality-of-life concerns about demanding schedules and the lack of paid sick time in the industry have threatened to derail the agreements even with the sizeable raises railroads are offering.</p> <p>Contract talks with the two unions that rejected their deals last month remain deadlocked over the issue of paid sick time. So it is looking increasingly likely that Congress will have to step in to settle this dispute</p> <p><i>If we can't improve the agreement by getting some sort of sick leave, I think Congress is going to have to intervene because I think the railroads are just too stubborn to give us what we want unless we are</i></p>

able to strike," Tony Cardwell, president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division union, said Monday.

The railroads have said they want these contracts to closely follow the recommendations made this summer by a special board of arbitrators that President Joe Biden appointed. Offering sick leave on top of the raises and bonuses that are already in the deal would require the railroads to spend more.

Congress is expected to block a rail strike and impose contract terms on both sides if they can't come to an agreement before next month's deadline. That's because the stakes are so high for the economy with so many businesses relying on railroads to deliver their raw materials and finished products.

When they're not at the negotiating table, the railroads and unions will be lobbying Congress over the next few weeks about what should be included if lawmakers do decide to impose contract terms on the freight railroads.

If the two biggest unions that represent conductors and engineers also reject their deals when they release the results of their votes next Monday, that would put additional pressure on the railroads. But Cardwell said he doesn't think even that would be enough to get the railroads to budge on sick time.

The railroads declined to comment Monday on the status of the talks with the BMWED and Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen unions, but they have been adamant about not offering paid sick time. They say they believe the unions agreed to forego paid sick time over the years in favor of higher wages and strong short-term disability benefits.

One reason the unions object to the railroads' refusal to offer sick time is because federal contractors are required by an executive order to give that to their employees. The railroads insisted they were federal contractors last year when they required employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine but now they say the sick time requirement doesn't apply to them.

Hundreds of business groups have written letters to Biden and members of Congress urging them to be prepared to intervene in the contract dispute, if necessary. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh has said he is in daily contact with the railroads and unions urging them to work out a deal.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Iran unleashes wrath on youthful protesters
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/world/middleeast/iran-protests-children.html
GIST	<p>One girl, a 14-year-old, was incarcerated in an adult prison alongside drug offenders. A 16-year-old boy had his nose broken in detention after a beating by security officers. A 13-year-old girl was physically attacked by plainclothes militia who raided her school.</p> <p>A brutal crackdown by the authorities in Iran trying to halt protests calling for social freedom and political change that have convulsed the country for the past two months has exacted a terrible toll on the nation's youth, according to lawyers in Iran and rights activists familiar with the cases.</p> <p>Young people, including teenage girls and boys, have been at the center of the demonstrations and clashes with security forces on the streets and university campuses and at high schools. Iranian officials have said the average age of protesters is 15.</p> <p>Some have been beaten and detained, others have been shot and killed on the streets, or beaten in the custody of security services, and the lives of countless others have been disrupted as the authorities raid schools in an effort to crack down on dissent.</p> <p>The authorities are targeting thousands of minors, under the age of 18, for participating in the protests, according to interviews with two dozen people, including lawyers in Iran involved in cases and rights</p>

activists, as well as parents, relatives and teenagers living in the country. Rights groups say that at least 50 minors have been killed.

The lawyers and many of the individuals interviewed for this article asked not to be named for fear of retribution.

The targeting of young people comes amid a broader crackdown on protesters in which 14,000 people have been arrested, according to the United Nations. On Sunday, state media said an unidentified person had been sentenced to death for setting fire to a government building.

But the Islamic Republic is unleashing its wrath on its youth in ways and on a scale not seen during other protests that have rocked the country over the past two decades, the rights groups say. The nationwide uprising, largely led by women, has seen daily protests in cities across the country calling for an end to rule by hard-line clerics in the aftermath of the death of a 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, in the custody of morality police in September.

Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, did not respond to questions about the government's actions against youthful protesters.

The government has responded to the youthful revolt with the same tactics it deploys against adults: shooting and beating some to death; arresting and throwing others into detention cells with adult inmates; and interrogating and threatening children and their families, according to rights groups, parents and lawyers.

The 14-year-old girl detained alongside the drug offenders had gone missing after attending a protest in the religious city of Qom. She was released on bail and was told she now has a criminal file and must be put on trial. The 16-year-old boy who had his nose broken had marched in a protest in the northwestern city of Tabriz, where the crowd chanted "Death to the dictator."

"What makes these protests different is children are much more visibly present, displaying a bold determination to defy the establishment and ask for a better future for themselves," said Diana Eltahawy, Amnesty International's deputy director for Middle East and North Africa. "And they are using all the tools of repression at their disposal to crack down on them."

Amnesty International said it had documented 33 cases of minors killed in the uprising, but the real numbers are likely higher. Iran-focused rights groups and the association for teachers say the number is closer to 50.

Lawyers and rights activists estimate that 500 to 1,000 minors are in detention with no clarity on how many are held in adult prisons.

At the juvenile detention facilities the children have been forced to undergo behavior therapy under the supervision of a cleric and a psychologist who tell the children they have committed sins and they must accept their wrongdoing, according to lawyers and rights activists. In several instances the children have been prescribed psychiatric drugs after resisting behavioral treatment, lawyers said.

In an audio message shared with The New York Times by a prominent Iranian human rights lawyer, Hossein Raeesi, a security officer said the government issued a confidential order demanding that all the cases involving children "must be handled by security and intelligence experts." The officer added: "The situation of the children is extremely grave, the cases are slowly emerging."

Mr. Raeesi said Iran's laws stipulate that minors can only be held at juvenile detention facilities and questioned by judges who are specially trained and assigned to juvenile courts.

Iran is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and its targeting and treatment of children, Mr. Raeesi said, violates its obligations.

In the Kurdish city of Kamyaran, a 16-year-old boy named Mobin was arrested and taken to a prison, where he was beaten in an assault that left his shoulder broken, according to Rebin Rahmani, a director at the Kurdistan Human Rights Network. When the boy was taken to the hospital for X-rays, the doctors planning to admit him were overruled by security forces, and he was returned to detention, Mr. Rahmani said.

Schools typically considered a sanctuary for children have suddenly turned into battlegrounds where students are at risk for simply attending class.

The New York Times documented 23 raids on high schools in cities across Iran, where plainclothes militia and intelligence agents interrogated, beat and searched students or where school authorities threatened or attacked students.

In one incident, a Tehran elementary school was attacked last month when security forces threw tear gas in its yard during recess because students were chanting anti-government slogans, according to a parent whose third-grade son attends the school.

“My children are not safe on the streets, and they are not safe in school anymore. Every day I die from anxiety until they get home,” said Sara, a 50-year-old mother of two teenage girls in Tehran who asked that her last name not be used. Last week, the school called to inform her that the plainclothes Basij militia planned a raid of the school and would demand access to the students’ phones. Sara did not send her daughters to school for two days.

Her 17-year-old daughter, a senior who asked not to be named for safety concerns, said she felt “empowered” because every day she has been protesting alongside her schoolmates by taking off their hijabs, banging on doors and chanting “Women, Life, Freedom.”

In Tabriz, a 14-year-old boy named Amir showed symptoms of trauma at home when he refused to eat and became reclusive, his family said. He complained of headaches and an upset stomach.

After three days, he told his uncle that his school had been raided by intelligence agents who had parked a police van in the yard and threatened to take students to jail if they had been found to have torn pictures of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in their schoolbooks or had expressed support for protests. They checked the students’ books and scanned their phones, taking screenshots of photos and social media posts.

“They had told Amir that if you tell your parents we will arrest your father,” his uncle, Ebi, a mechanical engineer who asked that his last name not be used, said by telephone from Tabriz. “They are terrorizing the kids because they are afraid of the future and they know these kids will fight for their rights.”

A mother in Shiraz said that the principal of Amin Lari High School, which her 14-year-old daughter attends, called the police and education department when students smashed framed pictures of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founding father of the revolution, and chanted slogans in the yard. When they raided the school, the principal gave them access to surveillance cameras to identify students who had instigated the protest. Sixteen were suspended.

In one of the most high-profile school incidents, the Basij militia last month stormed Shahed High School in the northwestern city of Ardabil and beat students, sending nine to the hospital in ambulances. Rights activists said a 15-year-old girl, Asra Panahi, was beaten to death.

But members of her family have publicly toed the government line that she committed suicide by swallowing pills, which rights groups say is because of pressure from the authorities.

“The families of children who are killed or arrested are under enormous pressure and threats to not tell the truth about their cases and not give their names,” said Yashar Hakakpour, director of the Canada-based

	<p>Association for Defense of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners in Iran. He said he had been in contact with people close to Asra's family and could confirm she was killed in the raid. "They think if they scare the parents, they can control the children too."</p> <p>Some children have disappeared from protests and their families have been unable to locate them, according to rights activists and media reports. Two brothers, 16 and 17, have been missing for more than a month in Zahedan, a city in the southeast of the country that has been the scene of a violent crackdown. Three 15-year-old girls have been missing for days in Lahijan.</p> <p>"They have never respected or accepted the concept of children having any rights," said Bahram Rahimi, a founding member of Iran's Committee to Protect the Rights of Children who is now in exile in California. "Even the most conservative families are infuriated at the way they are targeting children."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/15 Britain braces for painful budget cuts
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/15/world/europe/uk-economy-budget-recession-sunak.html
GIST	<p>SWINDON, England — Britain's energy crisis hit Chris Watts quicker and harder than most business people: His company installs and fixes gas boilers. As soon as news of skyrocketing fuel bills surfaced last August, he said, customers began putting off repairs and replacements. Desperate to cut expenses, many have yet to switch on the heat in their houses.</p> <p>"In the 28 years that we've been in business, we've never experienced the shock to the system that we're seeing now," said Mr. Watts, who was forced to move his family-owned firm to tighter quarters in a drab industrial park.</p> <p>Now, like tens of millions of Britons, he is also facing the prospect of a recession that the Bank of England warned could last for two years. "It's one thing after another," said Mr. Watts, 55, recalling his struggles to cope with the effects of Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic. "At some point, it's got to stop."</p> <p>While Britain has lurched from crisis to crisis since it voted to leave the European Union in 2016, the latest wave of bad news is of a different order: double-digit inflation, a grinding downturn, rising interest rates and political upheaval. The next body blow will come on Thursday when the new government is expected to announce that it will raise taxes and slash spending to try to plug a gaping hole in the nation's finances.</p> <p>The cumulative effect has been to throw normally stoic Britons into a gripping anxiety, not just in perennially downtrodden industrial areas but also in healthier, workaday cities like Swindon. A Victorian-era railway town 72 miles west of London, Swindon has reinvented itself over the decades, first as a site for automakers and more recently as a distribution hub for giant retailers like Amazon. It has also become a political bellwether, with a history of voting for the governing party of the day.</p> <p>Right now, the mood around town is dark.</p> <p>"I don't get it," said Dennis Azzopardi, 62, who works for Royal Mail and was celebrating his wife's birthday with her at a local pub. "The oil and gas companies are making billions. Why isn't any of that coming back to us?"</p> <p>The Azzopardis said they worried most for their two daughters, 33 and 36, who each have mortgages, which, like most in Britain, have shorter terms than those in the United States. With interest rates on loans spiking upward, one of their daughters will soon face a sharp rise in her monthly costs.</p> <p>Mr. Azzopardi said he hoped the new Conservative prime minister, Rishi Sunak, was better equipped to cope with these challenges than his predecessor, Liz Truss, who lasted only 50 days after her trickle-down tax plans caused havoc in financial markets ("He understands money a bit, doesn't he?" Mr.</p>

Azzopardi said of Mr. Sunak.) But he said he was skeptical that any government, including one led by the opposition Labour Party, would be able to fix the country's proliferating woes.

"Labour isn't what it used to be," Mr. Azzopardi said, in words that could apply equally to Swindon and Britain as a whole.

Though Britain shares many ills with other European countries, its predicament is compounded by two bespoke factors: the legacy of years of austerity, which hollowed out public institutions like the National Health Service, and Brexit, which has hindered trade with Europe, depressed corporate investment and squeezed the labor force by creating a shortage of foreign workers.

Among the Group of 7 advanced countries, Britain is the only one with an economy that is smaller now than it was before the pandemic started. It was recently overtaken by India as the world's fifth-largest economy, while Paris surpassed London as Europe's biggest stock market, by value, according to a Bloomberg calculation published on Monday.

The Bank of England's desperate battle against inflation — its hike in interest rates two weeks ago was the largest since 1989 — is expected to trigger a recession that economists say could be the longest since the 1930s.

Britain's troubles were magnified by the misbegotten fiscal experiment of Ms. Truss. Her plans for budget-busting tax cuts, many disproportionately favoring the rich, sent the pound into a free fall and drove up the yield on British bonds, which came within days of igniting a full-blown liquidity crisis for pension funds.

"In our recent history, there isn't an exact analogy for this situation," said Anna Valero, a senior policy fellow at the Center for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics. "We've had a series of long-term crises followed by these new shocks."

Mr. Sunak, a former chancellor of the Exchequer who once worked for Goldman Sachs, quickly calmed the markets. Interest rates on British assets have returned to more normal levels, which means Britain will no longer be discussed in the same breath as Italy at gatherings of finance ministers.

But the prime minister's tranquilizer came with painful side effects. He and his new chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, have warned that they will need to fill a shortfall of roughly 50 billion pounds (\$58.2 billion) in the budget to stabilize Britain's finances and preserve its credibility in the markets.

While the mix of tax increases and spending cuts they will impose is not yet clear, it is certain to evoke memories of the austerity budgets imposed by a former prime minister, David Cameron, and his chancellor, George Osborne, in 2010.

"Household disposable income is going to fall by more in the next two years than at any time since records began being kept in the 1950s," said Tony Travers, professor of politics at the London School of Economics.

Britain's wild ride in the markets has left Mr. Sunak with less room to maneuver. He is unlikely, for example, to try to overhaul the country's cumbersome urban planning laws, one of several contributors to Britain's sluggish growth rate since the financial crisis of 2009.

Swindon bears the scars of those calcified rules. After the Great Western Railway Works, which once churned out three steam-powered locomotives a week, was wound down, the city bounced back by attracting financial services firms and carmakers. In 1986, the same year that the railway factory finally closed, Honda Motor Company arrived.

But in July 2021, the Japanese carmaker closed its assembly plant, costing 3,500 jobs. While Honda insisted its decision reflected a desire to focus on Asia and the United States, local people blame it on

the city's rejection of a proposal by Honda to build wind turbines next to the plant. Mr. Sunak recently shelved a plan by Ms. Truss to make the construction of onshore wind farms easier.

"Sunak and Co. have been so spooked," said Jonathan Portes, a professor of economics and public policy at Kings College London. "Even if they wanted to, they feel as if they don't have the political space."

For many in Swindon, there is a lingering suspicion that Brexit also played a part in Honda's departure. The city weathered the plant shutdown, in part because Honda offered employees generous severance packages. But the loss of the factory's well-paying jobs contributed to a sense of diminished expectations.

Reg Bates, who worked as a quality control inspector for a company that made children's car seats for Honda, recalled his shock at bumping into a former colleague, who had found lower-paid work as a porter at a city hospital.

"Any employer in the country, no matter what the nature of the work, would be lucky to get a Honda employee," said Mr. Bates, now 70 and retired.

As Honda left, however, Amazon arrived — giving Swindon another foothold, though one lower on the economic ladder. The company built a sprawling warehouse and hired 2,500 workers, some of whom had worked for Honda. It pays a starting wage of 11.45 pounds (\$13.35) an hour; union organizers complain about the harsh working conditions that have dogged Amazon elsewhere.

For workers, Britain's labor shortage is a silver lining in the economic cloud. The demand to fill jobs is so great that they can easily find new work if they are not satisfied at Amazon or other companies. But the soaring price of food and fuel has made them aware of the corrosive effect of inflation in a way that previous downturns did not.

"For the first time, workers are seeing the effect of inflation driving past petrol stations on their way to work," said David McMullen, an official at G.M.B., a British trade union that is trying to organize workers at the Amazon plant.

For other people, however, Britain's multiplying woes are evidence of a political system that is broken. On a recent weekend, dozens of protesters gathered in Swindon to rally against the government and demand that it impose a wealth tax. A large billboard on the side of a building had pictures of the five prime ministers Britain has had since the Brexit referendum, above a slogan, "Nothing changes."

At the Swindon Hub, a community center on the tattered main shopping street, older people stopped in to warm themselves on a blustery, rainy day. The center's sponsors said it would stay open through the winter, when they expect the number of people who need shelter from the cold to increase.

"You'll be getting people that genuinely need help," said Jol Rose, 56, a member of the Hub's board. "We're picking up the pieces of a state infrastructure that is falling apart."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Beijing signals optimism with US
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/world/asia/us-china-biden-xi.html
GIST	<p>The prominent position of the photo on the front page of China's main official newspaper spoke volumes: In it, the nation's leader, Xi Jinping, smiled and shook hands with President Biden against a backdrop of Chinese and American flags.</p> <p>For months, the newspaper, People's Daily, has featured Mr. Xi's warnings that China must steel itself militarily and politically for an era of strife, denunciations of American policy and Communist</p>

Party [officials' warnings](#) that “hostile forces” — that is, the United States — were eager to sabotage China’s rise.

A day after Mr. Xi and Mr. Biden [met for nearly three hours](#), the upbeat picture of the two men in the paper on Tuesday, as well as guardedly hopeful comments from China’s foreign minister, Wang Yi, added to signs that Beijing is wagering that the nations can arrest a downward spiral in relations, even if deep disagreements persist.

“This meeting was both a continuation of exchanges up to now, and augurs a new starting point,” Mr. Wang [told reporters](#) after the summit, according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry transcript that also appeared in People’s Daily.

“The U.S. and China should show the world that they are able to manage and control their differences,” he said.

But Mr. Wang also offered a reminder that the long standoff over the future of Taiwan remains a source of potential crisis. Mr. Xi, like other Chinese leaders, has insisted that the self-ruled island eventually unify with Beijing.

In the talks with Mr. Xi, Mr. Biden said that Washington would hold to its “one China” policy, which acknowledges Beijing’s claim to the island but does not go as far as accepting that claim, and opposes any steps to unilaterally change the status of Taiwan.

On that and other points of disagreement, including human rights and sanctions, Mr. Wang indicated that the Biden administration needed to do more to reassure China’s leaders.

“Stop trying to contain and beat down China, stop meddling in China’s domestic affairs, and stop hurting China’s sovereignty, security and development interests,” he said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Ukraine testing ground for West weapons
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/15/world/europe/ukraine-weapons.html
GIST	<p>Three months ago, as Ukrainian troops were struggling to advance against Russian forces in the south, the military’s headquarters in Kyiv quietly deployed a valuable new weapon to the battlefield.</p> <p>It was not a rocket launcher, cannon or another kind of heavy arms from Western allies. Instead, it was a real-time information system known as Delta — an online network that military troops, civilian officials and even vetted bystanders could use to track and share desperately needed details about Russian forces. The software, developed in coordination with NATO, had barely been tested in battle.</p> <p>But as they moved across the Kherson region in a major counteroffensive, Ukraine’s forces employed Delta, as well as powerful weaponry supplied by the West, to push the Russians out of towns and villages they had occupied for months.</p> <p>The big payoff came on Friday with the retreat of Russian forces from Kherson City — a major prize in the nearly nine-month war.</p> <p>Delta is one example of how Ukraine has become a testing ground for state-of-the-art weapons and information systems, and new ways to use them, that Western political officials and military commanders predict could shape warfare for generations to come.</p> <p>The battle for Ukraine, to be sure, remains largely a grinding war of attrition, with relentless artillery attacks and other World War II-era tactics. Both sides primarily rely on Soviet-era weapons, and Ukraine has reported running low on ammunition for them.</p>

But even as the traditional warfare is underway, new advances in technology and training in Ukraine are being closely monitored for the ways they are changing the face of the fight. Beyond Delta, they include remote-controlled boats, anti-drone weapons known as SkyWipers and an updated version of an air-defense system built in Germany that the German military itself has yet to use.

“Ukraine is the best test ground, as we have the opportunity to test all hypotheses in battle and introduce revolutionary change in military tech and modern warfare,” said Mykhailo Fedorov, Ukraine’s vice prime minister and minister of digital transformation.

He was speaking in October at a NATO conference in Norfolk, Va., where he publicly discussed Delta for the first time.

He also emphasized the growing reliance on the remote-controlled aircraft and boats that officials and military experts said have [become weapons of choice](#) like those in no previous war.

“In the last two weeks, we have been convinced once again the wars of the future will be about maximum drones and minimal humans,” Mr. Federov said.

Since last summer, Ukraine and its allies [have been testing](#) remote-controlled boats packed with explosives in the Black Sea, [culminating in a bold attack](#) in October against Russia’s fleet off the coast of Sevastopol.

Military officials largely have declined to discuss the attack or provide details about the boats, but both the United States and Germany have supplied Ukraine with similar ships this year. Shaurav Gairola, a naval weapons analyst for Janes, a defense intelligence firm, said the Black Sea strike showed a sophisticated level of planning, given the apparent success of the small and relatively inexpensive boats against Russia’s mightier war ships.

The attack “has pushed the conflict envelope,” Mr. Gairola said. He said it “imposes a paradigm shift in naval war doctrines and symbolizes an expression of futuristic warfare tactics.”

The use of remote-controlled boats could become particularly important, military experts said, showing how warfare at sea might play out as the United States and its allies brace for potential future naval aggressions by China in the East and South China Seas, and against Taiwan.

Inevitably, the Russians’ increased use of drones has spurred Ukraine’s allies to send new technology to stop them.

Late last year, Ukraine’s military began using the newly developed drone-jamming guns [known as SkyWipers](#) to thwart Russian separatists in the eastern Donbas region. The SkyWipers, which can divert or disrupt drones by blocking their communication signals, were developed in Lithuania and had been on the market for only two years before they were given to Ukraine through a NATO security assistance program.

Nearly nine months into the war, the SkyWipers are now only one kind of drone jammer being used in Ukraine. But they have been singled out as a highly coveted battlefield asset — [both for Ukrainian troops](#) and [enemy forces that hope to capture them](#).

It is not known how many SkyWipers have been sent to Ukraine, although Lithuania reportedly sent several dozen in October 2021. In a statement to The New York Times, Lithuania’s defense ministry said it sent 50 SkyWipers in August after Ukrainian officials called it “one of the top priorities.”

Dalia Grybauskaite, who was Lithuania’s president when the SkyWipers were being designed, said her country’s defense industry made a calculated turn toward producing high-tech equipment during her time in office, from 2009 to 2019, to update a stockpile of weapons that “were mainly Kalashnikovs” and other Soviet-era arms.

“We’re learning in Ukraine how to fight, and we’re learning how to use our NATO equipment,” Ms. Grybauskaite said in an interview last week. “And, yes, it is a teaching battleground.”

She paused, then added: “It is shameful for me because Ukrainians are paying with their lives for these exercises for us.”

The Western lethal aid that is being sent to Ukraine consists, for the most part, of recently updated versions of older weapons. That was the case with the German-made infrared, medium-range homing missiles and launchers known as IRIS-T, which protect against Russian rocket attacks.

They [have a longer range](#) than the previous generation of air-defense systems that debuted in 2015. Germany’s own military has not yet used the updated version of the systems, which were shipped to Ukraine last month. [Additional missiles were delivered last week](#).

Rafael Loss, a weapons expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said that by themselves the upgraded air defenses do not “represent a game-changer.” But he said their use in Ukraine showed how the government in Kyiv had evolved beyond Soviet-era warfare and brought it more in line with NATO.

Senior NATO and Ukrainian officials said the Delta network was a prime example.

More than an early alert system, Delta combines real-time maps and pictures of enemy assets, down to how many soldiers are on the move and what kinds of weapons they are carrying, officials said.

That is combined with intelligence — including from surveillance satellites, drones and other government sources — to decide where and how Ukrainian troops should attack.

Ukraine and Western powers determined they needed the system after Russia instigated a separatist-backed war in Ukraine’s east in 2014. It was developed by Ukraine’s Defense Ministry with NATO assistance and first tested in 2017, in part to wean troops off Russian standards of siloing information among ground units instead of sharing it.

It has been included in training exercises between Ukraine’s military and other NATO planners in the years since.

Information sharing has long been a staple for American and other NATO forces. What NATO officials said was surprising about the Delta system was that the network was so broadly accessible to troops that it helped them make battlefield decisions even faster than some more modern militaries. In Kherson, Delta helped Ukrainian troops quickly identify Russian supply lines to attack, Inna Honchar, commander of the nongovernment group Aerorozvidka, which develops drones and other technology for Ukraine’s military, said in a statement on Sunday.

“Bridges were certainly key points,” Ms. Honchar added. “Warehouses and control points were damaged, and the provision of troops became critical” as Russians became increasingly isolated, she said.

Delta’s first real test had come in the weeks immediately after the February invasion as a [Russian convoy stretching 40 miles long](#) headed toward Kyiv. Ukrainian drones overhead tracked its advance, and troops assessed the best places to intercept it. Residents texted up-to-the-minute reports to the government with details that could have been seen only up close.

All the information was collected, analyzed and disseminated through Delta to help Ukraine’s military force a Russian retreat, Ukrainian officials said.

“That was the very first moment when Delta capabilities were realized at max,” the Ukrainian Defense Ministry said in a statement. It said Delta had since helped identify 1,500 confirmed Russian targets across the country on any given day — with “hundreds of them being eliminated” within 48 hours.

	<p>The test runs in Ukraine are helping senior officials and defense planners in the United States and its allies decide how to invest military spending over the next two decades.</p> <p>Even routine missions in Ukraine — like how to get fuel to missile-toting vehicles on the edge of enemy territory — have set off discussions in American commands over how to design equipment that is not dependent on supply lines.</p> <p>And longer-term strategy about how to coordinate and communicate among allied troops, which officials now say was a challenge during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, is being developed as the battle against Russia continues to unfold.</p> <p>Such strategic military reforms were being discussed before Ukraine was invaded, said Gen. Philippe Lavigne of France, who leads NATO's Allied Command Transformation, but "our early observations of this war is that those assumptions are still valid."</p> <p>He said Ukraine had shown how future warfare was likely to be fast-paced and highly contested not just on the ground or in the skies, but also, most important, in cyberspace.</p> <p>"This is the future operating environment," General Lavigne said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 CIA director warns Russia counterpart
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/us/politics/cia-russia-nuclear-weapons.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The head of the Central Intelligence Agency warned his Russian counterpart against using nuclear weapons in a face-to-face meeting on Monday in Turkey, White House officials announced, part of the Biden administration's effort to reduce the threat of escalation in the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>The talks, led by William J. Burns, the director of the C.I.A., were the highest-level in-person meetings between senior Russian and American officials since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February. The discussions are part of the Biden administration's efforts to step up its communications with senior Russian officials to convey concerns on the nuclear threat.</p> <p>Mr. Burns's meeting was not an attempt to negotiate with Russia over the end of the war — American officials have repeatedly insisted no peace talks will be conducted without the involvement of Ukraine's government. The discussions, instead, were almost entirely focused on the threat of nuclear escalation, these officials said.</p> <p>The talks between Mr. Burns and Sergei Naryshkin, the director of Russia's foreign intelligence service, were conducted at the behest of the Americans. They were scheduled after a period of rising tensions over nuclear issues.</p> <p>American and European leaders see their goal for now as keeping the war contained to Ukraine and preventing President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia from using a tactical nuclear weapon or another weapon of mass destruction.</p> <p>Mr. Putin has denied that Moscow was preparing to use a nuclear weapon in Ukraine. Those comments lowered the level of concern both in Washington and in European capitals, but repeated nuclear threats by Russia, and its repeated battlefield setbacks, mean worry over potential nuclear use remains high.</p> <p>Intelligence about conversations between Russian generals over the use of nuclear weapons circulated in the U.S. government in mid-October. Those reports raised concerns in part because they arrived around the time that Russia began accusing Ukraine of plans to use a dirty bomb, an explosive device that spreads radioactive material over an area. Some U.S. officials thought the allegations could be aimed at creating a pretext to use a nuclear weapon.</p>

Since Russia's invasion, American officials have emphasized their goal of supporting the Ukrainians while ensuring that the war does not escalate and potentially provoke a wider nuclear conflict.

Lloyd J. Austin III, the defense secretary, had two phone conversations with Sergei K. Shoigu, Russia's defense minister, about nuclear tensions in October. Jake Sullivan, the national security adviser, has also held calls with his counterpart, Nikolai Patrushev, about nuclear issues in recent months. And now Mr. Burns has traveled to Turkey to deliver another message.

A White House spokesman disclosed Mr. Burns's trip after Kommersant, a Russian business daily newspaper, reported on Monday that the Russian delegation in Ankara was led by Mr. Naryshkin.

The Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, later confirmed to Tass, a Russian state news service, that a meeting had taken place but did not offer details. A C.I.A. spokeswoman declined to comment; the agency never comments on the director's travel.

A spokesman for the White House's National Security Council said the Ukrainian government was briefed in advance on the trip. President Biden has insisted that Ukraine, and not the United States, will dictate if and when negotiations commence to end the war.

Russian and Ukrainian officials have made [separate public comments in recent weeks](#) about potential peace negotiations, more than six months after their [last known direct talks](#) fell apart.

Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has [argued that Ukraine should negotiate with Russia](#) to cement its recent gains. Other senior American officials do not believe either Russia or Ukraine [is ready to engage in meaningful negotiations](#).

In a post on the messaging app Telegram on Monday, Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhny, the commander of the Ukrainian military, said he had spoken to General Milley and reiterated the country's position on possible negotiations: Russia must withdraw before any talks are possible.

"The Ukrainian military will not accept any negotiations, agreements or compromise decisions," he wrote.

While Russia is losing, Mr. Putin does not believe his forces will ultimately be defeated and he will not make major concessions or give up land he has taken, according to American officials. Ukraine's government believes it is winning, and thinks next year it can retake land the Russian Army has seized.

Mr. Burns also raised in his meeting the matter of Americans detained in Russia, an American official said. The Biden administration has been trying to negotiate a prisoner swap with Russia to bring home the W.N.B.A. star Brittney Griner and Paul N. Whelan, who is imprisoned on espionage charges.

Ms. Griner has been detained in Russia since February after she flew to an airport near Moscow with a small amount of hashish oil in her luggage. She was sentenced in August to [nine years in prison](#).

In August, American and Russian officials said they would use a special channel set up by Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin at their meeting in Geneva last year to negotiate over Ms. Griner and Mr. Whelan. U.S. officials have declined to divulge details of that channel. The Biden administration [has offered to release Viktor Bout](#), a Russian arms dealer imprisoned in the United States, for the freedom of the two Americans.

But talks over Ms. Griner's and Mr. Whelan's release have been at an impasse, and U.S. officials said they did not expect any breakthrough as a result of Mr. Burns's trip, the focus of which is averting any potential for nuclear confrontation or escalation.

Mr. Burns's meeting also came as the United States announced new sanctions against Russian oligarchs linked to the Kremlin. In all, 14 people, 28 entities and eight aircraft were blocked, the [Treasury Department said](#), part of [an effort to disrupt supply chains](#) and make it more difficult for Russia to resupply its military.

In addition to serving as the C.I.A. director, Mr. Burns has been repeatedly tasked by Mr. Biden to conduct delicate negotiations with the Russians.

Before Mr. Putin ordered the full-scale invasion in February, Mr. Burns — who was also a former U.S. ambassador to Russia — [flew to Moscow](#) in last November to tell Russian officials that the United States knew of Moscow's plans and would forcefully respond to any incursion. Mr. Burns spoke by video to Mr. Putin, who was in Sochi at the time.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Pandemic drags on, struggle new balance
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/health/covid-attitudes-masks.html
GIST	<p>Jordi Salomon put the pandemic in the rearview mirror long ago. Her two little boys are back at school, where there has been no mask requirement since the spring. They attend birthday parties and theme parks, visit the library and play with friends.</p> <p>Ms. Salomon, 35, of Orange County, Calif., makes sure the family eats well and gets outdoors as much as possible, and she is careful to respect the wishes of friends and relatives who are comfortable meeting only in masks.</p> <p>“But I can’t live in fear,” she said. “My kids are only kids once. There is so much to do and experience in that magical time.”</p> <p>For Americans like Ms. Salomon, life has in many ways returned to something like the Before Times. Restaurants are packed, and cultural performances sold out. Children are sitting in schools, and workers are trickling back into offices. Masks are no longer required in public, even in New York City’s subways.</p> <p>The summer travel season was a blockbuster. Even cruise ships — derided as floating Petri dishes early in the pandemic — were filling up with eager passengers.</p> <p>Most Americans want to get back to normalcy and are unwilling to let Covid rule their lives any longer, Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House Covid response coordinator, said in an interview. “Those two sets of goals are achievable,” Dr. Jha said, so long as Americans keep getting vaccinated, test when necessary and wear masks in crowded public settings.</p> <p>“We shouldn’t act like it’s 2019,” he added, “but we also should not act like it’s 2020.”</p> <p>But the coronavirus has not gone away. While deaths have plummeted since the beginning of the year, about 315 Americans are still dying of Covid on the average day. This year’s toll has so far exceeded 219,000.</p> <p>More than 27,000 Americans with Covid are in hospitals on any given day, and an uncertain number face lingering complications, so-called long Covid. Declines in test positivity and hospitalization are flattening, hinting at a possible reversal.</p> <p>Roughly half of Americans eligible for boosters have not gotten them, and just 10 percent have gotten the most up-to-date bivalent booster. Experts are warning that waning immunity and the arrival of new subvariants may lead to another surge of cases and hospitalizations.</p> <p>“The pandemic is over — we still have a problem with Covid-19,” President Biden recently said. That is the needle that Americans are threading right now, and it makes for a strange national disequilibrium. On any given day, half the country appears to be relieved that the worst seems to be over, while the other half seems gripped by the persistent fear that the nation may never really be free of the virus.</p>

Most Americans are eating out again, visiting friends and returning to offices, according to recent surveys by Axios-Ipsos. Only 5 percent of respondents said they considered those activities to be high risk.

But fewer than one-quarter of them thought there was no risk at all. Close to half said they had returned to their pre-Covid lives — even as two-thirds said they believed the pandemic was not over.

“It’s a weird moment we’re in, and a confusing one, I think, for a lot of people,” said Debra Caplan, an associate professor of theater at Baruch College in New York, who added that she was mystified by what she termed society’s “collective shrug.”

Recently, one of her children was infected with the virus just a few weeks before sleepaway camp was to begin. The camp required a negative test result at least 24 hours before arrival, and the Caplan family went to great lengths to prevent additional infections at home.

They were all relieved when the child tested negative on time. “But after all this, we go to the airport to drop them off, and no one, no one, is wearing a mask,” Dr. Caplan said. “Here we are killing ourselves to make it so my kid can go to camp, and yet everyone is, ‘This is over, right?’”

In Illinois, Rachel Hoopsick drops her two children at preschool in the morning, even though she worries their vaccinations aren’t a perfect shield against the coronavirus and one of them is medically vulnerable.

Then Dr. Hoopsick, an assistant professor of kinesiology and community health, heads to the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she teaches a large class (including many unmasked students) about public health measures (like masks) that can curb the spread of infectious disease.

Life feels like an exercise in double-think, she said. “To participate in society right now,” she said, “you have to either be blissfully unaware or to dissociate and carry on as if there isn’t a pandemic.”

On a sunny weekend day at his maple syrup and candy stand at a highway rest stop in upstate New York, Chris Smith, 67, donned a mask whenever customers wearing masks approached.

But he stopped worrying about his own health long ago. Medical science had gotten the better of the coronavirus, he said, comparing it to influenza — “here forever,” but not as dangerous as it was before vaccines and treatments arrived.

“Now I figure if I do get it, they at least have an idea how to save me,” Mr. Smith, of White Creek, N.Y., said.

But many residents of Queens, the pandemic’s epicenter in March 2020, said in interviews that they still recalled the endless sirens as ambulances streaked through the streets.

Ducking into the post office or bagel store, or buying berries from a street vendor, many patted their back pockets, indicating they had a mask with them, even if they weren’t wearing it.

“I don’t think people have forgotten the refrigerated trucks,” said Yohuru Williams, 51, a former New Yorker, referring to the mobile morgues parked outside hospitals as bodies piled up at the height of the pandemic.

But in Minneapolis, where Mr. Williams lives now, he said that “the momentum to take precautions is waning.”

On a recent flight, he said, “only one other person on the plane had a mask on.”

Lizabeth Wright, a retired veterinarian who splits her time between Baton Rouge, La., and Austin, Texas, is vaccinated and up-to-date on boosters, and has resumed eating out and going to church.

But she's still on the fence about traveling by plane and attending large social gatherings. She believes masking in public is an important precaution, but she is tired of it — and keeps forgetting her mask at home.

Ms. Wright has been more confident since vaccinations were available, and she is in good health. But she feels that's no guarantee, saying: "I know young people have fallen very ill. It's kind of a roll of the dice."

Holding two contradictory ideas in mind simultaneously — the pandemic is over, we still have a problem with Covid — is intensely discomfiting, psychologists say. It is a form of cognitive dissonance, experienced when one's behaviors or actions are at odds with the information or understanding they have.

People are driven to reduce the discord by reconciling conflicting thoughts and behaviors, but the process is not a conscious one, said Elliot Aronson, a professor emeritus of social psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

People who smoke despite the known risks, for example, may tell themselves that they plan to quit in five years, or that their health is otherwise excellent.

As people tire of Covid precautions, for example, "they try to convince themselves it's OK not to wear a mask," Dr. Aronson said. "We all know people who had light cases and recovered quickly, and then it does feel foolish to be worried about a light case."

People also don't like to stand out, he noted. We are uncomfortable wearing a mask into a work meeting or social gathering, only to discover no one else is wearing one. "It creates the illusion that maybe we missed something, like, 'Maybe I didn't read The Times this morning and maybe they declared the whole thing over,'" Dr. Aronson said.

He advises people who want to make more rational decisions to think about the thing they least want to think about — perhaps the more than 300 people still dying daily of Covid in the United States, or that many people who had a mild illness went on to develop long Covid, he said.

"If you want to do the rational thing, you want to force yourself to dredge that up," Dr. Aronson said.

In this strange moment in the pandemic, Americans are forced to make sober judgments about health risks, but copious scientific research has shown that we have never been much good at it. We often fear the catastrophic risks that we cannot control and neglect the lesser risks that we can, and are swayed by the need for the immediate gratification that comes from pleasurable activities.

At the end of the day, different people will accept different levels of risk. Sarah Cotsen, who lives outside Portland, Me., threw a dinner party recently, the first she'd hosted since the pandemic started. Some guests RSVP'd immediately and said they weren't worried about the virus, but others were apprehensive.

She promised dinner would be held outside, but on the day of the party, it started pouring. So Ms. Cotsen improvised, throwing open all the doors and windows to let the breeze waft through the house.

The hesitant guests gathered on a screened porch, while others mingled inside.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 US opens probe into killing of journalist
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/world/middleeast/shireen-abu-akleh-justice-department.html

JERUSALEM — The U.S. Department of Justice has opened an investigation into the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian American journalist, in the occupied West Bank, the Israeli Defense Ministry announced on Monday night.

Israel's defense minister, Benny Gantz, confirmed that a U.S. inquiry had begun and said that Israel would not participate, reducing the likelihood that a court case would result. Several investigations have concluded that Ms. Abu Akleh, who was shot in the head on May 11, was probably killed by an Israeli soldier.

"The decision of the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the unfortunate death of Shireen Abu Akleh is a grave mistake," Mr. Gantz wrote in a statement in Hebrew. The statement added, "We will not cooperate with any external investigation, and we will not allow interference in Israel's internal affairs."

The announcement came six months after Ms. Abu Akleh, a reporter for Al Jazeera, was slain while covering an Israeli Army raid in Jenin, a Palestinian city in the West Bank. Her death drew global outrage and international attention to the dangers of life in the occupied West Bank.

The U.S. move represented a shift in the Biden administration, which had concluded that Ms. Abu Akleh most likely was killed by shots fired from the position of Israeli soldiers, but had refused to publicly demand that Israel open a criminal investigation.

The shift followed Palestinian anger at perceived American resistance to a full investigation, as well as several independent inquiries into Ms. Abu Akleh's killing. A monthlong investigation by The New York Times found that the bullet that killed Ms. Abu Akleh had been fired from the approximate location of an Israeli military convoy earlier that morning, most likely by a soldier from an elite unit, corroborating witness reports from the site.

Other news organizations and the United Nations reached similar conclusions.

The U.S. State Department said in July that shots fired from the position of Israeli soldiers were "likely responsible for the death" of Ms. Abu Akleh, but damage to the bullet made it difficult to draw a definitive conclusion about the gun from which it came. At that time, the United States also concluded that Ms. Abu Akleh had most likely been killed by accident — but the announcement on Monday suggested that at least some U.S. officials had drawn a different conclusion.

The Justice Department declined to comment on Monday.

Ms. Abu Akleh, 51, was killed while covering a rise in Israeli raids in the West Bank, a surge that has continued and that followed an earlier rise in attacks by Palestinians that killed 19 Israelis. She was shot while wearing a blue flak jacket marked "Press," and colleagues who came under fire at the same time said they had thought the army was already aware of their presence.

Israeli officials initially said that Ms. Abu Akleh had most likely been killed by a Palestinian gunman during clashes between Israeli soldiers and militants, before conceding in September that "there is a high possibility" that she was killed by an Israeli soldier, while ruling out a criminal investigation.

Ms. Abu Akleh was one of more than 120 Palestinians killed as of November this year during Israeli Army raids in the West Bank — most of them militants, but some of them civilians.

For Palestinians, her killing became a symbol of the daily dangers of life under Israeli occupation. Palestinian deaths rarely attract global attention, except during major episodes of violence, and Israeli soldiers accused of crimes against Palestinians in the West Bank are rarely jailed.

But Ms. Abu Akleh was a well-known figure in the Middle East, and her fatal shooting provoked more outcry. She had reported on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's occupation of the West Bank for more than 20 years.

HEADLINE	11/14 Brazil, Indonesia, Congo sign forest pact
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/climate/brazil-indonesia-democratic-congo-rainforest-protection-pact.html
GIST	<p>SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt — The three countries that are home to more than half of the world’s tropical rainforests — Brazil, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo — are pledging to work together to establish a “funding mechanism” that could help preserve the forests, which help regulate the Earth’s climate and sustain a variety of animals, plants, birds and insects.</p> <p>The agreement, announced on Monday and signed by ministers from the three countries, said they would cooperate on sustainable management and conservation, restoration of critical ecosystems and creation of economies that would ensure the health of both the people and the forests.</p> <p>The plan has no financial backing of its own and was more of a call to action than a strategy for how to achieve its goals.</p> <p>The announcement comes as Brazil’s president-elect, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, travels to Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, this week for the United Nations climate change summit, known as COP27.</p> <p>Mr. Lula is set to address the gathering on Wednesday. He has promised to end deforestation in the Amazon, which spiked under the leader he just defeated, Jair Bolsonaro. Mr. Lula does not take office until January but decided to appear at the climate talks, where he is expected to receive a warm welcome.</p> <p>Mr. Lula has also promised to give more representation to Indigenous people and make Brazil an environmental leader on the global stage once again.</p> <p>But Mr. Lula’s promises will be hard to keep. Brazilians elected the country’s most conservative Congress since the end of a military dictatorship in the late 1980s. Some of Mr. Lula’s fiercest critics are from the Amazon, where local leaders who have profited from weakened enforcement of environmental laws under Mr. Bolsonaro protested his victory.</p> <p>The agreement announced on Monday says the countries will press for “payments to reduce deforestation.” It does not say who or what would provide payments, but it builds on earlier initiatives such as a flagship payout program sponsored by the United Nations that rewards countries financially for keeping forests intact. All three countries share their rainforests with multiple neighbors.</p> <p>Joaquim Leite, Brazil’s environment minister, said the goal of the partnership was to attract private investors who would offer money in exchange for assurances against deforestation.</p> <p>“The most important point is that we can create a group to present the minimum standards for the asset of native vegetation, and a way to recognize and pay for this asset,” he said.</p> <p>While reducing fossil fuel emissions is the most important part of tackling climate change, forests play a critical supporting role. Trees absorb planet-warming carbon dioxide through photosynthesis, storing it in their trunks, branches and roots. When trees burn or rot, they release the carbon dioxide. That means standing trees can help temper climate change, while deforestation makes it worse.</p> <p>The forest agreement also has implications for a U.N. summit next month in Montreal, where nations will gather to hammer out a deal to protect and restore biodiversity. Tropical rainforests are incredibly rich environments that are home to countless species, some of them still unknown to science.</p> <p>International agreements to protect forests have yet to meaningfully change the trajectory of deforestation worldwide.</p>

The Amazon rainforest alone lost over 13,000 square miles of tree cover between 2019 and 2021, according to the National Institute of Space Research in Brazil.

In Indonesia, forest loss declined by a quarter last year from 2020, according to an April report from the World Resources Institute. It was the fifth year in a row of falling totals. But deforestation continued to rise in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which lost 1.2 million acres last year, largely as a result of land clearings for small-scale agriculture and charcoal production.

At last year's climate summit in Glasgow, 141 nations, including Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo, pledged to "halt and reverse" deforestation by 2030.

Tasso Azevedo, who helped create the Amazon Fund, one of the most successful financial mechanisms to preserve the rainforest, was unimpressed with the text of the agreement announced on Monday. "There is not one paragraph about action," he said. "And it's signed only by ministers, very little impact."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Workers on H-1B visas face challenges
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/industry-wide-tech-layoffs-uncertainty-workers-visas/281-d3ee94ba-beae-40e5-99bd-5c6af801d2a3
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — For foreign workers impacted by the tech layoffs, time is of the essence. Workers on a H-1B visa have 60 days to find another job or leave the country.</p> <p>"Nobody is getting a new job in 60 days," said Graham & Walker Managing Director Leslie Feinzaig. "That is by far the most vulnerable population in this entire equation."</p> <p>Thousands of layoffs have happened across the tech industry in recent months. However, the past few weeks have seen mass layoffs at some of the biggest names in tech.</p> <p>Meta, Facebook's parent company, let go of 11,000 workers last week. Twitter let go of roughly half its team, which included 208 workers in the Seattle area. Seattle-based Redfin sent out a memo last week that it intends to lay off 862 employees.</p> <p>"It's terrifying and it is happening a lot across the industry right now," Feinzaig said.</p> <p>The New York Times reported Monday Amazon plans to lay off 10,000 employees. Amazon has not confirmed the claim.</p> <p>The Washington Employment Security Department released new numbers about lay offs at Meta. The department said 307 Meta employees were let go in Bellevue and 419 Seattle workers.</p> <p>"If you are affected by layoffs, I think the first thing to note is that it is not a mar on your resume," said Feinzaig, "This is a great time to try the different ideas that you have been thinking about. If nothing comes from them, you will have at least learned about the process of entrepreneurship."</p> <p>The Employment Security Department expects a short term uptic in unemployment.</p> <p>"We are going to watching layoffs. We'll be watching unemployment insurance claims. Unemployment insurance claims are at the lowest we've seen in years," said Anneliese Vance-Sherman, a regional labor economist with the Employment Security Department.</p> <p>Currently, Washington unemployment sits at 3.7%.</p> <p>It's too early to know how many of those let go are foreign workers. Immigration attorney Tahmina Watson wouldn't be surprised if the number is more than 10%.</p>

Finding a new employer to sponsor a visa could be a challenge. Large tech companies have cut back on hiring, and in some cases have issued additional layoffs and hiring freezes.

"The 60-day clock is a very strict one," Watson said. "It is from the day you are laid off and days go by very quickly."

She said workers would need to get creative and work fast.

"The simple solution is to figure out how to retain the talent that this country actually needs while the economy is suffering," Watson said.

Feinzaig, who came to the United States as an immigrant in the early 2000s, can relate to what's happening. In 2008, while working on an H-1B visa, she was laid off.

"I don't think there's any immigrant that comes to America and gets a highly competitive job expecting to be let go from it and have to leave the county, their apartment, their lives, their girlfriends and boyfriends and friends and kids and all of the things, at the flip of a switch," Feinzaig said.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, an H-1B visa is a nonimmigrant classification for people who wish to work in the country on a temporary basis.

Watson recommends H-1B workers look into other visa opportunities, including a TN NAFTA permit or an E-2 classification if they qualify. She also said workers might choose to start a company and employ themselves.

"In every adversity there is opportunity," Watson said.

Watson recommended foreign workers who are considering starting a company consult an attorney. Feinzaig also sees opportunity. She expects to see new start-ups and feels many could become thriving healthy businesses. In fact, it's something she's excited about as an investor.

"I think, the next 12 months, we're going to see the best companies in a generation come out of these hard times," Feinzaig said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Washington crabbing season canceled
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/wa-crabbing-season-canceled-amid-population-busts/UMCLNED44NBBZC66JL5AV4RWXU/
GIST	<p>Washington's North Pacific crabbers are sitting idle this year, because, for the first time ever, the U.S. snow crab season has been canceled.</p> <p>The North Pacific snow and red king crab seasons are canceled this year, devastating small businesses and crabbers in Alaska and Washington state.</p> <p>Many factors contributed to crab harvests being suspended this year, including dropping populations from overfishing and climate change.</p> <p>Tim Novotny, head of the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, spoke about how important the role of fishermen played in monitoring the health of these ecosystems.</p> <p>"Keep in mind the role that the fishermen play in science, you know, they're out there fishing and trying to bring food and bring that in safely to the table," Novotny said. "But at the same time, a lot of these guys know the water just as well as a lot of the scientists do, and they see these changes."</p>

	<p>But crab businesses that have existed for generations now have no income, and the repercussions will affect entire communities that support the industry.</p> <p>Jamie Goen is the Executive Director for the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers. She said, in 2018, there were a lot of small snow crabs in the ocean and things were looking really good.</p> <p>“What they think happened is that those crabs required more calories, so they didn’t have enough out there to survive, given how many were out on the grounds and the population essentially collapsed,” Goen said.</p> <p>She says there was increased disease in the crab population as well – due to the warming waters. It will take the current small snow crab 3 to 5 years to grow to a fishable size.</p> <p>Goen says they are pushing Congress to speed up the fishery disaster process to save businesses, many of which have been in families for generations.</p> <p>“We think the population and that our fisheries are closed in part due to climate change. That’s definitely playing a role. But there are many factors playing a role, including fishing impacts from other sectors that are continuing to impact the stocks even when our fisheries closed and we’re not fishing on them,” Goen said. “I think it’s going to take national policy change in the U.S. for how we do fisheries management, how we incorporate science, and how we adapt more rapidly to changes that are happening.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Ferries on alternating schedules for now
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/washington-state-ferries-to-run-on-alternating-schedules-until-further-notice-anacortes-san-juan-islands-seattle-bremerton-edmonds-bainbridge-island-mukilteo#
GIST	<p>Several ferries will run on alternating schedules beginning Tuesday and until further notice, according to Washington State Ferries (WSF).</p> <p>WSF said the following routes will feature alternate schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle/Bremerton • Edmonds/Kingston • 2-Boat Fauntleroy/Vashon, 2-Boat Fauntleroy/Southworth, 2-boat Southworth/Vashon <p>The following routes are running restored fall schedules, WSF said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anacortes/San Juan Islands (reservations available) • Port Townsend/Coupeville (reservations available) • Mukilteo/Clinton • Seattle/Bainbridge Island • Point Defiance/Tahlequah <p>"These changes will help offer more predictable and reliable service systemwide in the face of crewing shortages," WSF said. "WSF will attempt to add service when possible and will provide notifications when full service can temporarily be restored to a route."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Seattle mayor eyes gunfire detection tech
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/gunfire-detection-technology-discussion-community-meeting-seattle-washington-gun-violence-shot-spotter-city-council-mayor-bruce-harrell-crime-prevention-alarms-911-police-surveillance-shooting-critics-trigger#
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — A plan by Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell to purchase gunshot detection technology ran into a wall at city council on Monday when it was stripped from the proposed budget. A community group is lobbying to bring it back.</p>

Shots-fired calls are soaring around Seattle and have increased 24 percent so far this year compared to 2021. That is taking a toll not just among gunshot victims, but also on the lack of safety some neighborhoods now feel.

“What I’ve learned about this technology is that it’s just a no-brainer for communities that suffer from gunshots that don’t know where they come from,” said Felicia Cross, one of the attendees at a meeting Monday night hosted by the African American Community Advisory Council to the Seattle Police Department.

Meeting organizers invited a representative from the company ShotSpotter to explain how its shooting detection technology works.

Acoustic sensors are set up atop buildings or street lights to record the sound of gunshots and triangulate their origin, according to Gerard Tate, the director of community impact and engagement at ShotSpotter. Technicians analyze the sounds to confirm they are from gunfire, then send an alert to police with a precise location, Tate said.

“By quickly getting officers to those incidents, they can then get EMTs to those scenes, in addition to the officer’s preliminary life-saving efforts,” Tate said. “It’s the number one biggest thing that we highlight.”

[The American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) and others have criticized such systems](#), saying they can generate false alarms and lead to overly aggressive police responses.

Tate said the technology has the potential to reduce excessive policing.

“This increases the situational awareness of officers going directly to the incident without needing to drive around a general area questioning multiple different people,” Tate said.

Investing in gunshot detection technology was tried before in Seattle but failed. Supporters said it is worth another look.

“We can’t sit back and not do anything and that’s what we’re doing. If this would save a life we need to do it,” said Victoria Beach, the chair of the African American Community Advisory Council.

The mayor wants to spend \$2 million over the next two years to launch a pilot program, which could be with ShotSpotter or another company. However, the city council is proposing to pull the funding for the plan although the final budget is not yet finalized.

The mayor would also have to draft a surveillance impact report before the technology could be deployed.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Seattle businesses \$1.3B forgiveness loans
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-business-paycheck-protection-program-ppp-forgiveness-loans-covid-19-pandemic#
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic many people lost their businesses, while others leaned on the government for hundreds of billions in cash to stay afloat as the economy was shut down.</p> <p>Two and a half year later, we’ve learned that more than 600 businesses in Seattle received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) forgiveness loans, costing taxpayers more than a billion dollars.</p> <p>None of the businesses did anything wrong, it’s just the process of the loan that’s being looked at.</p> <p>According to data from the U.S. Small Business Administration, 612 Seattle businesses took out PPP loans ranging from \$1 million to \$10 million that they don’t have to pay back.</p>

When the pandemic hit, the economic shut down followed shortly after as businesses across the country were hit with operating restrictions.

Congress created the \$700 billion Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) in an effort to compensate employers so they could in turn keep their employees on the payroll.

Thousands of businesses took advantage of the loans, including hundreds in Seattle.

“So we can debate the merits of Congress' COVID aid programs, but here's what we can all agree on, every dime of this COVID aid was borrowed against the national debt, which now just exceeded \$31 trillion, so we're gonna be paying all of this back for generations,” said Adam Andrzejewski, who runs openthebooks.com.

He crunched the data for the Seattle area and found a total of \$1.3 billion in forgiven, large federal loans, were given out.

“I think people will feel that it's shocking, that the system was gamed by people who may or may not have had a real need and a real plan to millions of dollars worth of COVID aid,” said Andrzejewski.

Take Seattle Goodwill Industries for example, which now operates under the name Evergreen Goodwill of Northwest Washington. One of the largest single loans received of \$10 million, all forgiven.

Evergreen Goodwill told KOMO News in a statement, "In March of 2020, our 24 retail stores and 30 donation centers shuttered. For four months, our sales dropped to zero, and our main source of funding for our mission, came to a halt. The loan allowed us to continue to help people secure life-changing jobs and support the economic prosperity of Northwest Washington communities during a very difficult time."

Then there's the Seattle Times and subsidiaries: two loans totaling \$11.8 million in 2020 and 2021, both forgiven.

“The Seattle Times needs to justify their \$11.8 million subsidy. Why did they really need it and why? How can you be an independent journalist if you're subsidized by government? So on the editorial page of the Seattle Times, they need to answer these questions,” said Andrzejewski.

Meantime, over \$100 million in forgiven PPP loans was doled out to Seattle law firms.

One of the largest in the country, Lane Powell PC, received a forgiven loan of \$8.4 million.

In a statement, Lane Powell told KOMO News, "It enabled us to maintain our workforce through a time when it was difficult or impossible for many of our employees to perform their duties as they had before the pandemic."

According to the openthebooks.com, this is a company with an estimated annual revenue of \$94 million. We reached out to the Seattle Times, as we did with Goodwill and Lane Powell PC, but never heard back. Andrzejewski said knowing what we know now, he feels Congress needs to authorize strong forensic audits on every PPP loan greater than a million dollars.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is [keeping track of the PPP loans](#) that have been taken out and forgiven by the federal government.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 RSV cases surge, patients flood hospitals
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article268740242.html

GIST

Pediatric hospital officials from across the state issued urgent pleas to families on Monday as emergency rooms, particularly in Western Washington, have become strained beyond capacity with young patients suffering respiratory infections.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus infection, or RSV, is making an earlier than usual appearance this year, along with flu, taking a toll on children and young patients statewide. The surge follows years of COVID isolation, low RSV infection rates and strict masking in public settings.

As a result, the virus is spreading faster amid more vulnerability and less herd immunity, officials said Monday at a Washington State Hospital Association briefing. The surge is overwhelming pediatric offices, urgent care centers and ERs.

For the pediatric medical community, “This is our COVID,” said Ben Whitworth, chief operating officer for Tacoma-based Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital and Health Network. “This should be on the front page of everybody’s mind,” he said, as the hospital faces an “unprecedented surge and patient volumes.”

Dr. Mary Alice King, medical director of Harborview’s pediatric ICU, and other officials said everyone needs to focus on preventive measures to help ease the medical strain, including staying home when sick, emphasis on good hygiene and plenty of hand washing, along with getting vaccinated against COVID and flu.

“I think right now we need a major PR campaign because I don’t think folks get this,” King said. “I think people are so tired from COVID and they don’t understand the urgency of what we’re talking about.

“We need to flatten this RSV curve and we need to think proactively about flattening the influenza curve.”

Officials rattled off grim percentages of overflowing emergency rooms and families seemingly shocked at patient wait times at hospitals.

At Mary Bridge on Monday morning, Whitworth said, there were 23 patients in the waiting room. “We have children in our waiting room that have been waiting since 10 o’clock last night, so greater than 12 hours.”

He noted that more than 60 percent of its emergency department visits and about 80 percent of its hospital admissions are respiratory related.

The picture wasn’t much better elsewhere, as few available beds along with staffing shortages make the RSV surge worse. Budgets for and availability of travel nurses have dwindled, officials noted, as hospitals nationwide still compete for travelers.

Incentive pay is being offered to existing staff to help cover shifts.

“We are in crisis mode ... bordering if not already in disaster mode in our emergency departments across the state,” said Dr. Tony Woodward, medical director of Emergency Medicine at Seattle Children’s Hospital.

During Monday’s news briefing with reporters, Woodward noted that his hospital was “at 200 percent capacity at this time of the day, which is almost unheard of.”

“We’re terrified that we won’t be able to take care of all the kids,” said King, who also represented the Washington Medical Coordination Center for pediatrics in Monday’s briefing.

Dr. Mike Barsotti, chief administrative officer for Providence Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital in Spokane, said that it was only a matter of time before the state’s east side saw the same level of cases.

	<p>“We are definitely in a surge that we are just building to the level that’s being described on the west side. ... We’re not going to get away from it,” Barsotti said.</p> <p>Washington’s low patient bed count, which drew attention during the COVID surges of years past, is in the spotlight again with even fewer pediatric beds available.</p> <p>“We only have about 500 pediatric beds in Washington state,” King said. “And of those, only 122 are pediatric ICU beds.” Child behavioral health cases also are adding to the demand of area emergency departments, as patients go to the ER “unable to access those services in the community,” said WSHA executive vice president Taya Briley.</p> <p>The number of RSV patient admissions alone has been more than double in some weekly tallies at Mary Bridge this fall compared with previous years.</p> <p>In figures provided Monday from MultiCare media representative Scott Thompson, At Mary Bridge “early 2020 (January/February) we had weeks where we had close to 20 RSV admissions. Jump forward to fall 2021/early 2022, we had weeks with more than 20 RSV admissions.</p> <p>“Now, fall of 2022 (September/October) we’ve had a couple of weeks with close to 50 RSV admissions.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Seattle housing market widens budget gap
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/seattles-cooling-real-estate-market-widens-budget-shortfall/
GIST	<p>Seattle’s cooling housing market is impacting more than just buyers and sellers. With fewer transactions and lower prices on the horizon, key city revenues are expected to fall.</p> <p>City officials had to rework the budget this month after new forecasts showed Seattle will likely bring in tens of millions of dollars less than previously expected over the next two years, including a significant drop in real estate-related tax revenue.</p> <p>As inflation persists, interest rates remain high and many people find themselves locked out of buying a home, forecasters expect “a dramatic decline in the number of homes sold and a modest decline in prices,” Ben Noble, director of the Seattle Office of Economic and Revenue Forecasts, told council members in early November.</p> <p>That matters to the city budget because of a tax charged on each sale, called the real estate excise tax, or REET. The city now expects REET revenue to be \$64 million lower than once expected between now and 2024.</p> <p>Forecasters also expect a slowdown in new construction. That will likely mean less revenue from sales and business taxes.</p> <p>The downturn underscores how the city’s budget relies on the ups and downs of the housing market. It could also preview the fallout from a slowdown in the building boom that has defined the city for the last decade.</p> <p>On Monday, Seattle City Council budget chair Teresa Mosqueda unveiled her balancing package, incorporating requests from the mayor and council as well as the grim new revenue projections. The proposal trims projects funded by REET and, in some cases, swaps in other revenues. The budget was the result, she said, of “tough choices.”</p> <p>Market drives gloomy outlook</p> <p>Seattle’s \$7 billion budget relies on an array of revenue sources, not all of them linked to the real estate market. But several key taxes track closely to home sales and cranes on the skyline.</p>

Seattle and many other cities across the state charge a 0.5% REET on all property sales, based on the sale price. The revenues can only be used for certain capital projects, such as libraries, roads, sidewalks and, recently, affordable housing, and are often committed to pay back debt on those projects. (The state charges its own REET, which varies based on the sale price.)

Skyrocketing home prices and a rush of sales have increased those revenues in recent years. In 2021, Seattle brought in more than \$112 million from the REET, up from \$101 million in 2019.

Some decline was not a surprise. In earlier forecasts, the city expected to bring in \$106.6 million in REET revenues this year and nearly \$95 million each year in 2023 and 2024. However, now the city expects about \$95.3 million this year, just \$68.1 million in 2023 and \$68.6 million in 2024.

Mosqueda's proposal would reduce proposed spending on parks maintenance, sidewalk and bridge-painting projects and planning for seismic retrofits at libraries set to be funded by REET, among other budget shifts.

At the same time, sales taxes and business and occupation taxes are expected to fall short by about \$22 million over three years. New construction accounts for roughly a quarter of the city's sales tax revenues.

Property tax revenue, by contrast, is more stable because of state law that limits annual property tax increases to 1%, except for voter-approved measures. That means local governments didn't see a huge influx when property values climbed in recent years and don't expect to see a dramatic drop as the market slumps, Noble said. Seattle expects those revenues to fall short of earlier expectations by about \$3.4 million over three years.

The REET will struggle not only because home prices are expected to decline slightly but because the volume of sales has already begun to slow significantly.

Home prices "don't go down as quickly as they go up, usually. What happens is people just don't sell," said Steven Bourassa, chair of the University of Washington's Runstad Department of Real Estate.

"On pause"

Commercial real estate investors are facing similar headwinds. Higher interest rates mean it's more expensive for investors to borrow.

"Everyone is sort of on pause," said Katie Parsons, a Seattle-based managing director in valuations for JLL, a commercial real estate firm.

The types of property still drawing significant investor interest aren't a major part of the landscape in Seattle. Industrial land and storage facilities are attractive for investors, Parsons said.

As for the office market, tech layoffs and remote work point to a potential decline in demand for office towers like those in downtown Seattle. About 18% of downtown office space was vacant in the third quarter of this year, according to a JLL report.

Even so, big investors "still have quite a bit of capital" they will spend somewhere, Parsons said. She expects investors to stay interested in "trophy assets," such as the newest office towers, while smaller and older office buildings could become less valuable.

Apartment buildings are likely to remain attractive for investors, Parsons and Noble said.

Seattle's budget struggles highlight the link between the cooling market and the excise tax used by many cities across the state to fund basic projects.

	<p>If local governments “rely heavily on taxes that depend on real estate transactions in one way or another,” Bourassa said, “they are dependent on the housing cycle.”</p> <p>For Seattle, taxes on new construction and real estate transactions are not the biggest revenues, but they are “significant,” Noble said in an interview.</p> <p>That’s especially true because of the city’s growth. Compared to smaller cities such as Shoreline, Seattle “is potentially more vulnerable than its municipal neighbors because we have been the focus of a significant boom in construction,” Noble said.</p> <p>What’s next</p> <p>How long will Seattle’s bleak outlook last? That depends largely on interest rates, Noble said. The forecasts the city uses expect the housing market to recover if interest rates decline in 2024 or 2025.</p> <p>“If interest rates stay high,” Bourassa said, “then the market is going to continue to be weak.”</p> <p>Goldman Sachs predicts home prices will fall by 5% to 10% from their peak and start to rebound in late 2024.</p> <p>Windermere economist Matthew Gardner predicted Monday that while home prices may decline, “it won’t be enough” to make homes affordable for first-time buyers.</p> <p>Mosqueda said in an interview she sees the volatility as another argument for upzoning to draw in more development and, in turn, tax revenue. Townhomes, apartments and condos can help alleviate the housing shortage, she said. “It is also good for the bottom line for cities.”</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Students rally, demand more school safety
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/seattle-students-walk-out-demanding-better-gun-safety-measures/
GIST	<p>Thousands of Seattle students walked out of class and rallied in front of Seattle City Hall on Monday morning, calling for better mental health support, more restrictions on gun access and more training for security staff in the wake of a shooting Tuesday at Ingraham High that left one student dead.</p> <p>Carrying hand-lettered signs, they crammed onto public transit and marched along city blocks to air their demands and grievances about student well-being and school violence.</p> <p>Students, accompanied by some parents, filled the entryways and stairs of City Hall and spilled onto the sidewalk, holding signs that read “1,457 kids dead in 2022, how many more?” and “Why do we need to miss class to tell you we’re unsafe.”</p> <p>Attendees observed 4 minutes of silence for the 17-year-old victim before marching around City Hall and down to Westlake.</p> <p>Monday marked the first day back in session at Ingraham, and students there and across the city walked out shortly after school began.</p> <p>Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Brent Jones has outlined new steps to address student security and well-being. But some students and families at Monday’s rally questioned whether change will happen in a timely and meaningful manner.</p> <p>Ingraham sophomore Sefa Yap headed to the City Hall rally by bus with four friends Monday morning. “The fact that someone was able to bring a gun on campus and was able to fire that gun at another student during school hours just goes to show that there aren’t things that are protecting students,” Yap said.</p>

She said the online scheduling system to see a counselor at school is booked out for weeks, and it's often hard to find an appointment that works around a student's class schedule.

"A school shooting is something no student, family or educator should have to endure," Jones said in [a video statement](#). "We cannot allow violence to take root in our community. We must do more to prepare our students to resolve conflicts with words, not weapons."

Taking action

Last week, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal and other local and state school and government leaders [called for more gun safety measures and restricted access](#).

Nyshae Griffin and Tawaf Aboudou, both Garfield High students, said they want to see an end to gun violence affecting schools and communities. "People shouldn't have the power to take another life," Aboudou said.

Griffin said it's incomprehensible to think that someone was able to take a gun into a school building. Adults in leadership positions need to be more attentive to students and offer more mental health resources, said Griffin, who said mental health is obviously an issue for someone who would think to bring a gun to school and take someone's life. "This shouldn't happen."

On Monday, Seattle City Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda proposed a budget adjustment that would set aside an additional \$2 million over two years to expand mental health services in schools. Mosqueda described the funding as a "down payment" on the student demands which will be further addressed in future budgets.

The money would come from JumpStart payroll tax revenue, and would go to the city's Department of Education and Early Learning.

"This budget invests in ongoing investments in gun violence reduction, as well as increasing mental health counselors for youth," Mosqueda said.

Last week, Jones introduced a new safety initiative that would include a districtwide safety and security audit; the creation of a "community action team," which would include city and police personnel; and the creation of a "child well-being council." He did not give a timeline for these initiatives to be rolled out.

Student demands

Monday's walkout was organized by the Seattle Student Union, a group of student activists, and Ingraham Students Against Gun Violence.

They are asking for 1 mental health counselor for every 200 students, a demand they first raised during Seattle student protests against school violence last year. The current ratio is 1 counselor per 350 students, according to the district, with the highest need occurring at the middle school level.

"Personally I've talked to my family about [what happened], but there are a lot of people who don't have that kind of support system at home and look for a support system at school or at other places," said Yap, the Ingraham sophomore. "You can talk to your friends but talking to an adult is a different thing and it's not really available to everyone right now."

Students say they also want the district to include a class about navigating interpersonal conflicts using dialectical behavior therapy in the high school graduation requirement. "This form of communicatory aid, combined with wellness curriculums already in place, will allow all students to work through internal and external friction," students said.

Students said they don't want armed police officers in schools. They do want security specialists trained in de-escalation tactics, anti-racism and restorative justice practices to help prevent violence and intervene when problems arise.

Students are also calling for schools to use “beneficial outreach programs,” like Tutors Impacting Public Schools, to “recognize the intersectionality and diversity of learning styles where our school systems do not” and “address inequity in public education” to help kids focus on being successful.

Lina McRoberts, a student at Ballard High School who helped organize Monday’s walkout, was hopeful the students’ list of demands would be met.

The shooting at Ingraham High school was “heartbreaking and awful,” she said.

“You almost can’t imagine it happening to you,” McRoberts said. Then it hits close to home and your world is sort of suspended, she added.

When Sezim Basaran, a Lincoln High sophomore who previously attended Ingraham, got word of what happened, she said one of her teachers canceled classes for the day so students could talk and cry with each other.

While some Ingraham students say their teachers helped their students close windows and blinds and keep quiet during last week’s lockdown, others say their teachers kept on teaching because they thought it was a drill.

Tuesday’s shooting at Ingraham was the first shooting inside a Seattle school building since the 1990s.

During Monday’s rally, Seattle police estimated there were about 2,000 people in the City Hall crowd. Later, between 700 and 900 protesters marched down city streets to continue the rally at Westlake. McRoberts called the crowd’s size “liberating and empowering.”

“It showed me that we’re not alone,” she said.

Students weren’t the only ones protesting. Some parents joined the rally, including Vanessa Lemafa, who went with her son, Kenai, a first-year student at Ingraham.

For Lemafa, the past several days have been a test of her parental skills as she tried to explain last week’s tragedy. She said it’s been challenging for her own mental health as well. She called for safer schools and stricter gun laws.

Hopefully the walkout will bring greater awareness, but change must be forthcoming, she said. “Where’s the help?”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 WA will not renew Cooke fish farms leases
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/wa-will-not-renew-leases-for-puget-sound-fish-farms-5-years-after-atlantic-salmon-spill/
GIST	<p>No more Cooke Aquaculture fish farms in Puget Sound.</p> <p>That’s the message the state Department of Natural Resources delivered Monday morning when the agency decided not to renew the last of the fish-farming company’s leases on net pens here.</p> <p>The company’s last net pens in Puget Sound are located in Rich Passage near Bainbridge Island and Hope Island in Skagit Bay. Cooke has until Dec. 14 to wrap up steelhead farming and begin deconstructing their equipment, according to DNR officials.</p> <p>According to letters sent from DNR to the company Monday, Cooke had a history of failing to comply with the provisions outlined in agreements.</p>

Since taking over the leases in 2016, the fish-farming giant had made improvements outside of the leasehold, and other times did them without consent, according to the state's letters.

Cooke did not comment on the decision, but a representative said the company may do so later.

The decision to cut ties ultimately stems from a 2017 spill of tens of thousands of nonnative Atlantic salmon after a net-pen break at Cypress Island near the San Juans.

Then, the New Brunswick, Canada-based company vastly underreported the number of escaped fish, according to a [state investigation](#). Cooke leaders initially blamed the spill on strong tides tied to the solar eclipse. The claim was debunked.

Investigators found as many as 263,000 of the farm's fish escaped, not the 160,000 Cooke told the public. The farm held a total of more than 300,000 fish weighing some 3 million pounds. Months after the spill, more than 200,000 were still reportedly unaccounted for.

After the net-pen collapse, Hilary Franz, the state public lands commissioner, ordered inspections of Cooke's facilities.

Cooke then lost its lease to operate its Port Angeles Atlantic salmon farm after an inspection revealed the farm was not adequately maintained and was outside its leasehold boundaries. Cooke challenged the decision in court, but a Thurston County Superior Court judge [ruled in favor](#) of state regulators.

The state Legislature in 2018 passed a law effectively phasing out net-pen farming of exotic species in Washington waters. Cooke has since [pivoted to raise steelhead](#).

DNR determined that Cooke's operations could pose risks to the state's natural environment, each of the letters states.

Feeding fish in concentrated areas releases nutrients and organic matter that can contribute to algae production, state officials wrote. And fish poop can degrade the environment on the ocean floor.

There's also a risk of attracting and trapping wild populations; and the risk of escapes are a reality of fish farming, the state wrote.

"Despite years of litigation — and a company that has fought us every step of the way — we are now able to deny lease renewals for the remaining net pen sites," Franz said in a statement. "Today, we are returning our waters to wild fish and natural habitat. Today, we are freeing Puget Sound of enclosed cages."

The 2017 incident sparked an outcry to shut down nonnative fish farming in Washington, with 20 Western Washington treaty tribes at the forefront.

The escape threatened the state's already weak stocks of native Pacific salmon and treaty fishing rights, said a 2017 statement from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

DNR cited opposition to the fish farming from the Swinomish and Suquamish tribes. Rich Passage is part of the Suquamish Tribe's fishing grounds.

Swinomish leaders told DNR the Hope Island net pens were adversely impacting fish and fish habitat in Skagit Bay; and the pens were located near Lone Tree Point, a sacred cultural area for the tribe.

"Swinomish are the People of the Salmon, and fishing has been our way of life since time immemorial," Swinomish tribal community chairperson Steve Edwards wrote in an email. "Cooke's net pens have interfered with the exercise of our treaty rights for far too long. We look forward to the day when the Hope Island net pen facility will be a distant memory."

“A big nightmare”

Months after the 2017 spill, the nonnative fish were migrating up some area rivers — more than 40 miles deep in the Skagit. They swam north into British Columbia, and south past Tacoma.

At Lummi Nation, Jay Julius recalls he climbed out of bed and hopped on a boat day after day for weeks on end in an attempt to clean up the spill. Looking back, the days blend together.

Julius, a lifelong fisherman, and others made their way around the island on boats, finding pockets and bays where schools and stragglers were swimming around, confused. Fishers tried to follow the tide, but the fish proved hard to find.

The farm fish would swim in circles, like they had in their pens. Fishers found they could throw pebbles — resembling the farm’s fish food — in the water and round them up, Julius said.

He had caught upward of 20,000 pounds of the fish.

Fishers scooped up thousands of the fish in an attempt to mop up the spill like the ecological hazard it was deemed to be.

The nonnative salmon were handed out to any willing takers in trash bags. Others sat still in garbage cans.

“It was obviously a nightmare,” he said. “Usually you’re excited to see fish. We are excited to see that amount of fish in one spot. But in this case, it was just a big nightmare.”

Commercial salmon farming began in Puget Sound more than three decades ago. Atlantic salmon — the most commonly farmed type of salmon worldwide — was most Washington farmers’ pick.

The Hope Island lease expired in March and has been in month-to-month holdover status since. The Rich Passage lease expired in November.

Commissioner Franz is expected to announce new net pen policies for all of the state’s aquatic lands at a Bainbridge Island news conference Friday morning.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Quake early-warning system: on cellphone
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/11/14/earthquake-early-warning/
GIST	<p>SAN FRANCISCO – Your phone can now warn you before an earthquake arrives.</p> <p>Yes, before.</p> <p>“Be-be-boop! Be-be-boop! Earthquake,” rang an app on my iPhone at 11:42 a.m. on Oct. 25. “Drop, cover, hold on, shaking expected.”</p> <p>A 5.1-magnitude earthquake had just struck about 50 miles away in California’s Silicon Valley. I leaped out of my chair and grabbed a wall. A few seconds later, the ground began to rumble.</p> <p>This feat of science and personal technology is the best example I’ve seen of how smartphones can help protect tens of millions of us from significant danger. I’ll show you how to get it.</p> <p>Known as ShakeAlert, America’s earthquake early-warning system was developed by the U.S. Geological Survey and partners to give you typically up to 20 seconds of advance warning before significant shaking arrives, or even a minute in extreme circumstances. If you’re close to the epicenter, you might not get much notice – but it could still be enough to protect yourself.</p>

After nearly two decades of development, ShakeAlert is now operating in California, Oregon and Washington state, where it's considered 83 percent complete. The USGS is considering expanding the system to Alaska next.

ShakeAlert got one of its largest tests with that October earthquake, when it took less than 10 seconds for the system to send about 2.1 million warnings to Californians like me. Thankfully, there were no reports of major injuries. For me, the little bit of early notice helped me prepare mentally for what was about to come.

The experience also left me wondering: How can a push alert reach my phone faster than shaking does? "That's a multistage process, and really I find it just fascinating that we can do it all," says Dave Croker, a member of the ShakeAlert operations team at the USGS.

I met up with Croker at a USGS field station a few miles from California's notorious San Andreas Fault, where he showed me how the system fits together – starting with your cellphone.

Smartphones have a capability that Croker says is a game changer for earthquake safety: They always know your location.

When a USGS field station detects an earthquake starting in one place, its network can calculate where else will likely also experience shaking. Knowing your location means the apps and cell towers can beam out the warnings only to the phones in places that might need it.

It's easy to take smartphones for granted, but the last time San Francisco had a major earthquake — in 1989 — officials could communicate with people only over radio, TV and loudspeakers.

Today, the USGS doesn't beam out ShakeAlerts to phones directly. Instead, it produces the information and then lets partner apps and cell carriers deliver the warnings. (There's hope for the future that alerts could also go directly to internet-connected speakers and smoke alarms, and automatically instruct trains and elevators to slow or stop.)

If you have an Android phone, you're good to go. Google added ShakeAlert to its operating system in 2020 after the California portion first came online. The warnings pop up automatically on your phone's lock screen, so long as you have location services and emergency notifications enabled. These alerts are tuned to arrive for earthquakes that are both at least magnitude 4.5 and are also expected to produce noticeable shaking at your location. (If severe shaking is expected, Android will send a special take-action alert.)

If you use an iPhone, there's a bit more work involved. You'll need to download and run a free app such as MyShake, made by the University of California at Berkeley, or QuakeAlert. Unfortunately, you'll have to repeatedly give the app permission to know your location at all times. (Apple, which has been heavily touting other iPhone safety features, said it didn't have anything to share about integrating earthquake alerts into iOS.)

Regardless of what kind of phone you use, ShakeAlert can still find its way to you if an earthquake of magnitude 5 or higher hits. For areas also likely to surpass a high shaking threshold, wireless carriers are equipped to automatically send warnings to every phone using a similar emergency system to Amber Alerts. You just need to have government alerts activated in your phone's settings.

So how do they figure out there's an earthquake headed your way?

USGS's Croker asked me to meet him on a little spit of land on the west side of the San Francisco Bay. There, he unlocked a green box bolted to the ground.

Inside are two motion sensors that don't look anything like the seismographs I pictured with bouncing needles. One is a pro-grade version of an accelerometer (like we have in our phones) that can measure very violent shaking, and the other is a velocity sensor to detect very small trembles.

These sensors, powered by a nearby solar panel and battery, beam their readings back to the USGS central computers 24 hours per day. That connects them into a network of about 1,400 other sensor stations up and down the West Coast. In densely populated and known seismically active areas like the Bay Area, they're located every 3 to 6 miles. But Croker says the system also needs geographical distribution to work. "The Earth never reveals all her secrets – we still have earthquakes in places we're not sure they're going to happen," he says.

When the sensors report significant shaking, some serious math begins on the USGS computers. First they determine the magnitude and location of the quake – triangulating readings from multiple sensors to weed out false alarms.

Then they use these clues to estimate where else shaking will occur. "It took a lot of smart people to figure out how to turn the magnitude into an estimated ground shaking intensity level quickly enough that it could determine the area to which we send the alert," Croker says.

It crunches the numbers in less than five seconds, and then the USGS's partners beam the warnings across the internet and through cellular data signals at the speed of light.

The system is effective because long-range earthquake waves travel through rock relatively slowly – speeds can be as low as 1.9 miles per second. That's why the farther you are from the epicenter, the more warning you'll receive.

But you're still going to need a plan for what to do when you see that alert. Forget the adage about going under a doorway, says Croker. Instead, emergency officials say you should drop and grab onto something solid like a wall, and cover your head to protect from any falling debris.

Your cellphone really could save your life – if you're prepared.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 CDC tracking rise of new variant: BN.1
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cdc-now-tracking-bn-1-the-latest-new-covid-variant-on-the-rise/
GIST	<p>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is now tracking the rise of another COVID-19 variant known as BN.1, according to figures published by the agency this month, marking the latest new Omicron descendant now spreading around the country this fall.</p> <p>Some 4.3% of new COVID-19 cases nationwide are now linked to the BN.1 variant, according to "Nowcast" estimates released on Friday by the CDC.</p> <p>Prevalence of the new strain is largest in the West, in the region that spans Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada. 6.2% of new cases in that area, HHS Region 9, are from BN.1.</p> <p>News of the new variant comes as the nationwide pace of new COVID-19 hospitalizations, which had been falling since September, has begun to inch up again over the past few weeks.</p> <p>A CDC official said Saturday at a webinar hosted by the Infectious Disease Society of America that BN.1 is estimated to be doubling in proportion roughly every two weeks across the country, though they cautioned that early estimates remain muddy.</p> <p>"The uncertainty in that doubling time is a little higher because the absolute number of sequences is low, because the proportions are low, so has much larger confidence intervals," the CDC's Natalie Thornburg said.</p>

Scientists first designated the BN.1 strain [back in September](#), from descendants spotted in Europe and Asia of the BA.2.75 variant.

Some BN.1 strains carry mutations that could result in "high immune escape," [according to](#) predictions from a tool designed by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center's Bloom Lab.

All BN.1 strains carry a change dubbed the R346T substitution, which Thornburg said "we see in a lot of the circulating viruses right now." That mutation to the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 [could thwart](#) a key medication used to protect people with weakened immune systems.

BQ.1, BQ.1.1, and XBB

BN.1 joins a crowded field of emerging Omicron variant descendants that have swelled in recent months, overtaking the [BA.5 variant](#) that had dominated cases over the summer.

The [BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 variants](#) remain the most prevalent of the recent new strains. Close to half of infections nationwide are from one of the two, in the CDC's estimates.

"Our best estimate is that it's doubling about every 10 days. So if you do the math, BQ.1.1 is likely to become dominant in the next months," Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House's top COVID-19 official, told CBS News last month in an interview.

Another variant that had been watched closely abroad – XBB – has yet to reach large enough levels in the U.S. to merit being listed as a standalone strain. Thornburg said Saturday that the CDC still estimated XBB at less than 1% nationwide.

However, the CDC's variant [surveillance](#) in international airports has spotted growing numbers of XBB in arriving travelers so far: 13% of samples through late October were from XBB, 30.4% were from BQ.1 or BQ.1.1, and none were from BN.1.

Findings announced by Moderna [on Monday](#) from its updated COVID-19 booster shot suggests the new vaccines may still offer at least some protection against BQ.1.1.

At the Saturday webinar, Thornburg said the CDC is also working on releasing "very soon" new real-world data on the effectiveness of the bivalent shots against the current strains so far.

But the rise of the new strains threatens to bench other key tools used to treat and prevent COVID, especially for more vulnerable Americans.

The National Institutes of Health's COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines panel warned last week that new variants could evade some COVID-19 treatments like Eli Lilly's monoclonal antibody, bebtelovimab, [urging clinicians](#) to stop using the drug in regions where these strains were dominant.

That now includes the New York and New Jersey region, where the CDC estimates that BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 now make up a majority of infections.

The rise of these and other evasive Omicron variants also threatens the protection offered by AstraZeneca's Evusheld, the panel warned, which had been a key tool to protecting immunocompromised Americans.

Jha said it could take up to six months for companies to develop new versions of their drugs to counter the latest variants. He blamed Congress for not passing funding which could have subsidized proactive development of new formulations.

"I can't say I'll pay for it through the U.S. government, because we don't have the money and they know it," said Jha.

HEADLINE	11/14 Flu cases, hospitalizations double in week
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Health/weekly-flu-cases-hospitalizations-deaths-double-2nd-week/story?id=93266907
GIST	<p>Weekly flu cases, hospitalizations and deaths have nearly doubled for the second week in a row, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>So far this season, there have been at least 2.8 million illnesses, 23,000 hospitalizations and 1,300 deaths from influenza.</p> <p>By comparison, the prior week's estimates had illnesses at 1.6 million, hospitalizations at 13,000 and deaths at 730.</p> <p>Additionally, the cumulative hospitalization rate currently sits at 5 per 100,000, which is the highest at this point in the season since the 2010-11 season, as far back as statistics are available.</p> <p>What's more, 6,465 new patients were admitted to hospital this past week with flu complications, according to the CDC, compared to 4,326 the previous week.</p> <p>Fourteen states -- mostly in the southeast and south-central regions of the U.S. -- as well as New York City and Washington, D.C., are reporting "very high" levels of influenza-like activity.</p> <p>Experts have stressed that getting the flu shot is the best way to protect Americans from severe illness and death, but vaccine uptake has been sluggish in comparison with previous flu seasons during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>According to CDC data, flu vaccination among children remains similar to last season but is lower than two years ago.</p> <p>As of the week ending Oct. 22, the latest date for which data is available, 24.8% have been vaccinated against flu in comparison with 32.1% at this time in October 2020.</p> <p>CDC data shows that flu vaccinations among pregnant women are much lower compared to previous seasons.</p> <p>At the end of September, the latest date for which data is available, 21% of pregnant women were vaccinated against the flu. By comparison, 26.4% had been vaccinated by the end of September 2021 and 38% had been at the end of September 2020.</p> <p>This is especially concerning because pregnant women are more likely to fall severely ill and die compared to women who are not pregnant.</p> <p>Receiving a flu shot can lower a pregnant woman's risk of being hospitalized from flu by around 40%, according to the CDC.</p> <p>Additionally, a recent study jointly conducted by the CDC and the University of Auckland, in New Zealand, found that women who receive a flu vaccine have a lower risk of complications, including premature birth, low birthweight and stillbirth.</p> <p>The newest data comes as the U.S. experiences a surge of respiratory illnesses, including respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV.</p> <p>Data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services showed 78% of the estimated 40,000 pediatric hospital beds in the country are filled with patients -- the highest figure recorded in two years.</p>

HEADLINE	11/14 UK pulls troops Mali peacekeeping mission
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-withdrawing-troops-mali-peacekeeping-mission-93273032
GIST	<p>LONDON -- Britain announced Monday it is withdrawing its peacekeepers from Mali, saying the West African country's growing reliance on Russian mercenaries is undermining stability.</p> <p>Armed Forces Minister James Heapey said the 300-strong British force that has been stationed in Mali since 2020 as part of a United Nations peacekeeping mission will leave earlier than planned. He did not give a timeline.</p> <p>Heapey told lawmakers in the House of Commons that "responsibility for all of this sits in Bamako," Mali's capital. "Two coups in three years have undermined international efforts to advance peace."</p> <p>Tensions have grown between Mali, its African neighbors and the West after Mali's government allowed Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group to deploy on its territory.</p> <p>Heapey called Wagner's forces "a bunch of murderous, human rights-abusing thugs."</p> <p>"The Wagner Group is linked to mass human rights abuses and the Malian government's partnership with the Wagner Group is counterproductive to lasting stability and security in their region," he said.</p> <p>France announced earlier this year it was withdrawing its own, much larger force from Mali after relations deteriorated with a junta that seized power in 2020. France, the former colonial power in Mali, led a nine-year mission and had at its peak 5,500 troops in the country to combat Islamic militants.</p> <p>Mali has been in turmoil since a 2012 uprising when mutinous soldiers overthrew the president. The power vacuum that resulted ultimately led to a jihadist insurgency and a French-led war that ousted the jihadists from power in 2013.</p> <p>Insurgents remain active in Mali and extremist groups affiliated with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have moved from the arid north to more populated central Mali since 2015, stoking animosity and violence between ethnic groups in the region.</p> <p>Heapey said Britain remained committed to Mali and the wider Sahel region, and he would meet colleagues from across Europe and West Africa in Ghana next week "to coordinate our renewed response to instability in the Sahel."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 EU border agency: illegal migration spiking
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/eu-border-agency-illegal-migration-entries-spiking-93275149
GIST	<p>WARSAW, Poland -- The European Union's border agency said Monday that the number of illegal entries by migrants spiked to more than 275,000 in the January through October period this year.</p> <p>The figure is 73% higher than at the same time in 2021, and the highest since a peak in 2016, Frontex said.</p> <p>The Warsaw-based European Border and Coast Guard Agency said that most entries continue to happen on the Western Balkan route, where over 128,000 of them were detected. The migrants on that route are mainly from Burundi, Afghanistan and Iraq.</p> <p>The central Mediterranean route, with migrants chiefly trying to reach Italy, has also seen a 48% rise in unauthorized arrivals, surpassing 79,000 in the first 10 months of 2022, a Frontex statement said.</p>

	<p>However, the activity has slowed down on the Western Mediterranean route and on the land route from Ukraine and Belarus. EU members Poland, Lithuania and Latvia have built walls on their borders with Belarus to stop the migrants from trying to illegally enter.</p> <p>Frontex said that the high number of crossings on the West Balkans area “can be attributed to repeated attempts to cross the border by migrants already present” in the area, but also to people “abusing visa-free access to the region.”</p> <p>It said some migrants fly visa-free to Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, which isn't in the EU, and then head toward the external border of the 27-member bloc.</p> <p>In response, Frontex has added more than 500 corps officers and staff to the region.</p> <p>In total, more than 2,300 corps officers and Frontex staff are “taking part in various operational activities at the EU external border,” the agency said.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Germany, Poland in takeovers of gas firms
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/germany-nationalizes-subsiary-russias-gazprom-93267658
GIST	<p>BERLIN -- Germany and Poland announced separate takeovers of natural gas companies that had links to Russian energy giant Gazprom on Monday, saying the moves were aimed at securing supply as Europe struggles with an energy crisis tied to the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>Germany said it is nationalizing the former German subsidiary of Gazprom months after it was put under the control of a government agency, its latest nationalization in the energy industry since Russia's invasion.</p> <p>The government cited the debt load of the company, which has been renamed Securing Energy for Europe, and said it was making the move to head off the danger of bankruptcy and ensure that it keeps running. The Economy Ministry said that SEFE, which is involved in the trade, transport and storage of natural gas in Germany and neighboring countries, is “a key company for Germany’s energy supply.”</p> <p>Poland’s government, meanwhile, said it has taken “temporary compulsory management” of Gazprom’s share in the Yamal gas pipeline system in Polish territory. It said the takeover was needed for the country’s energy security and to ensure smooth decision-making in a company vital for gas flows.</p> <p>As European countries supported Ukraine, Russia slashed supplies of natural gas used to heat homes, generate electricity and power industry, creating an energy crisis that is fueling inflation and forcing some factories to shut down as prices have risen.</p> <p>Germany, a major importer of Russian gas before the war, hasn’t received any gas from Russia since the end of August, while Poland was cut off in April.</p> <p>Polish Minister for Development and Technology Waldemar Buda said the management takeover was necessary to ensure the proper functioning of EuRoPol Gaz pipeline company, owned by PAO Gazprom and Poland’s energy giant PKN Orlen.</p> <p>After Poland sanctioned PAO Gazprom over the war in Ukraine, Buda said there was a “decision stalemate” at EuRoPol Gaz, with the Polish operator having “no partner” to decide on the necessary maintenance work with.</p> <p>“We are doing everything possible to eliminate the effects of Russia’s aggression and to eliminate Russian capital and Russian influence,” Buda said.</p> <p>In Germany, confusion over ownership and sanctions also played into the decision to nationalize a former Gazprom subsidiary.</p>

In early April, the German government put its network regulator in charge of what was then Gazprom Germania after an opaque move by the former parent company to cut ties with the unit. The regulator was appointed as the company's trustee, with the right to dismiss and appoint managers.

The company was subsequently hit with sanctions by Russia in a tit-for-tat move for Western sanctions over Ukraine.

Germany's Economy Ministry said the Russian sanctions put the company in a difficult financial situation and that business partners and banks have either ended ties with it or declined to build new ones as a result of the unclear ownership situation.

SEFE already had received 11.8 billion euros (\$12.2 billion) in government loans to stabilize the company. That is now being increased to 13.8 billion euros.

The government is taking over SEFE via a capital cut that removes previous stockholders, along with an injection of some 225.6 million euros in new capital under the umbrella of a government-held holding company.

It's the latest energy sector nationalization by Germany. In September, the government said German authorities were taking control of three Russian-owned oil refineries to ensure energy security. Two subsidiaries of Russian oil giant Rosneft were put under the administration of the national network regulator.

Shortly afterward, the government announced the nationalization of the country's biggest natural gas importer, Uniper. The company's losses had mounted as Russia reduced gas supplies.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Renewed Iran attacks in northern Iraq
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/officials-renewed-iranian-attacks-northern-iraq-kill-93249326
GIST	<p>BAGHDAD -- Missiles fired from Iran targeted bases of an exiled Iranian Kurdish opposition group in neighboring Iraq on Monday, killing at least one person and wounding eight, local officials said. It was the latest in a series of such attacks in recent weeks.</p> <p>One official with the Iranian opposition in Iraq later put the death toll at three while the health minister in Iraq's semi-autonomous, Kurdish-run region said the casualty number was expected to rise.</p> <p>Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard confirmed the attack in Iraq's Sulimaniyah province and said it had targeted the bases of "terrorist groups" by drones and missiles, according to Iran's official IRNA news agency.</p> <p>Kurdish Prime Minister Masrour Barzani condemned the attack as a violation of the sovereignty of Iraq and the Kurdish region. The U.N. mission in Iraq also condemned the attack, saying Iraq should not be "used as an arena to settle scores."</p> <p>"Dialogue between Iraq and Iran over mutual security concerns is the only way forward," the U.N. mission added.</p> <p>Iraq is planning to pursue diplomatic steps in response to the Iranian attacks, said Iraq's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed al-Sahaf.</p> <p>"The Iranian bombing offends the principle of good-neighborliness. Some neighbors systematically abuse Iraq," he said.</p>

The missiles targeted the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran, which has waged an insurgency against the Iranian government since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Korosh Nosrati, an Iranian opposition official in Iraq, said three people died in the missile strikes. Saman Barzanji, the Iraqi region's Kurdish health minister said the casualty numbers could rise.

Iran stepped up attacks targeting Kurdish opposition groups exiled in northern Iraq in September accusing them of orchestrating ongoing anti-government protests that have swept Iran over the past two months.

Gen. Mohammad Pakpour, chief of the Revolutionary Guard's ground forces, reiterated the accusation Monday, saying the Kurdish groups played a role in protests in Iran, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

"The terrorist groups carried (out) terrorists activities in Iran from Iraq," the report quoted Pakpour as saying. He also claimed Iran had found evidence linking separatist elements to the protests, without offering proof for that claim.

Tasnim also said that Pakpour demanded that Iraq disarm and order the opposition group's bases to be moved a further 120 kilometers (75 miles) from the Iraq-Iran border.

Iranian opposition groups in Iraq have vocally backed the protests in Iran [but deny organizing them. They say Tehran is trying to scapegoat them to divert attention from the widespread anger fueling the nationwide protests, in which protesters have been killed by Iranian security forces and thousands more detained since September.](#)

Amnesty International has reported that detainees have been tortured and killed unlawfully inside Iran's prisons, and demanded that Iranian authorities allow international monitors unhindered access to Iranian prisoners.

Hossein Ronaghi, an imprisoned blogger, was transferred to hospital leading to allegations he had suffered torture in Evin Prison. Iran's judiciary said Monday he was "in good health," without providing more details about why he was receiving medical care or the charges against him.

Ronaghi and his two lawyers were arrested in September. Since 2009 and during post-election turmoil, authorities detained Ronaghi routinely on security charges.

Ronaghi, a political critic and activist, was known for teaching people how to bypass Iran's internet blockades even as the government blocked access to many social network platforms.

The protests in Iran were sparked by the Sep. 16 death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was detained after allegedly violating the country's strict dress code for women. Amini was Kurdish.

The protests first focused on ending Iran's mandatory headscarf, or hijab, but have transformed into calls to end the country's clerical rule. The demonstrations are now in their eighth week.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 US Navy seizes Iran missile fuel to Yemen
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-navy-70-tons-missile-fuel-iran-yemen-93309123
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates -- The U.S. Navy said Tuesday it found 70 tons of a missile fuel component hidden among bags of fertilizer aboard a ship bound to Yemen from Iran, the first-such seizure in that country's yearslong war as a cease-fire there has broken down.</p> <p>The Navy said the amount of ammonium perchlorate discovered could fuel more than a dozen medium-range ballistic missiles, the same weapons Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels have used to target both</p>

forces allied to the country's internationally recognized government and the Saudi-led coalition that supports them.

The apparent rearming effort comes as Iran has threatened Saudi Arabia, the United States and other nations over the monthslong protests calling for the overthrow the Islamic Republic's theocracy. Tehran blames foreign powers — rather than its own frustrated population — for fomenting the protests, which have seen at least 344 people killed and 15,820 people arrested amid a widening crackdown on dissent there.

The Houthis could not be immediately reached for comment. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

“This type of shipment and just the massive volume of explosive material is a serious concern because it is destabilizing,” Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins, a spokesman for Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet, told The Associated Press. “The unlawful transport of weapons from Iran to Yemen leads to instability and violence.”

The U.S. Coast Guard ship USCGC John Scheuerman and guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans stopped a traditional wooden sailing vessel known as a dhow in the Gulf of Oman on Nov. 8, the Navy said. During a weeklong search, sailors discovered bags of ammonium perchlorate hidden inside of what initially appeared to be a shipment of 100 tons of urea.

Urea, a fertilizer, also can be used to manufacture explosives.

The dhow was so weighted down by the shipment that it posed a hazard to nearby shipping in the Gulf of Oman, a route that leads from the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, out to the Indian Ocean. The Navy ended up sinking the ship with much of the material still on board due to the danger, Hawkins said.

The Sullivans handed over the four Yemeni crew members to the country's internationally recognized government on Tuesday.

Asked how the Navy knew to stop the ship, Hawkins only said the Navy knew through "multiple means" that the vessel carried the fuel and that it came from Iran bound for Yemen. He declined to elaborate.

“Given the fact it was on a route usually used to smuggle illicit weapons and drugs from Iran to Yemen really tells you what you need to know,” Hawkins said. “It clearly wasn’t intended for good.”

The Houthis seized Yemen’s capital, Sanaa, in September 2014 and forced the internationally recognized government into exile. A Saudi-led coalition armed with U.S. weaponry and intelligence entered the war on the side of Yemen’s exiled government in March 2015. Years of inconclusive fighting has pushed the Arab world’s poorest nation to the brink of famine.

A United Nations arms embargo has prohibited weapons transfers to the Houthis since 2014. Despite that, Iran long has been transferring rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, missiles and other weaponry to the Houthis via dhow shipments. Though Iran denies arming the Houthis, independent experts, Western nations and U.N. experts have traced components seized abroad detained vessels back to Iran.

A six-month cease-fire in Yemen's war, the longest of the conflict, expired in October despite diplomatic efforts to renew it. That's led to fears the war could again escalate. More than 150,000 people have been killed in Yemen during the fighting, including over 14,500 civilians.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 China consumer, factory activity down
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/china-consumer-factory-activity-virus-controls-rise-93307630

GIST	<p>BEIJING -- Chinese consumer spending contracted in October and factory activity weakened as anti-virus controls following a rise in infections weighed on the economy.</p> <p>Retail sales sank 0.5% compared with a year ago, down from September's 2.5% expansion, as millions of people were confined to their homes, government data showed Tuesday. Growth in factory output decelerated to 5% from the previous month's 6.3%.</p> <p>The performance was even weaker than expected by forecasters who said activity would cool as Chinese anti-virus controls and interest rate hikes by the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks weighed on global activity.</p> <p>"November is shaping up to be even worse," said Zichun Huang of Capital Economics in a report.</p> <p>Chinese economic growth rebounded to 3.9% over a year earlier in the three months ending in September from the first half's 2.2%, but economists say activity already was cooling. They have cut forecasts of annual growth to as low as 3%, which would be among the weakest in decades.</p> <p>October imports shrank 0.7% from a year earlier, down from the previous month's 0.3% expansion as consumer demand fell, according to customs data released earlier. Exports declined 0.3%, a reverse from September's 5.7% rise.</p> <p>Business and consumer activity slumped in mid-2021 after the government tightened controls on use of debt by China's vast real estate industry, a major engine of growth. Housing sales and construction, which employs millions of people, plummeted.</p> <p>President Xi Jinping's government has been trying to prop up growth without reviving a rise in corporate and household debt that Beijing worries is dangerously high.</p> <p>Anti-virus controls were tightened in areas across China following an uptick in infections in mid-October. Apple Inc. warned deliveries of its new iPhone 14 model would be delayed after access to an industrial zone around its biggest factory was suspended due to outbreaks.</p> <p>Beijing announced last week it would try to reduce the impact of its "zero-COVID" strategy, which aims to isolate every infected person, by shortening the quarantine for travelers arriving from abroad and making other changes.</p> <p>However, authorities said they are sticking to a goal of trying to keep cases near zero at a time when other countries are relaxing controls and trying to live with the virus.</p> <p>The new approach is "a bit of a gamble," Huang wrote. "It could result in greater spread of the virus, eventually triggering a more forceful response."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Haiti prime minister ousts top officials
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/haiti-prime-minister-ousts-top-officials-amid-us-93258699
GIST	<p>PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Prime Minister Ariel Henry has dismissed Haiti's justice minister, interior minister and its government commissioner in a fresh round of political upheaval.</p> <p>Former Justice Minister Berto Dorcé first fired Government Commissioner Jacques Lafontant on Henry's orders before being ousted himself days later along with Interior Minister Liszt Quitel, according to documents that The Associated Press obtained on Monday.</p> <p>Quitel had previously served as justice minister.</p>

	<p>Henry did not say why the officials were removed, and his spokesman could not be immediately reached for comment.</p> <p>Henry has become Haiti's interior minister while still serving as prime minister, and Emmelie Prophète Milcé was named justice minister, the fifth one in the past two years as the country struggles to bring to justice all those involved in the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.</p> <p>The dismissals come a month after the U.S. government announced it was pulling the visas belonging to current and former Haitian government officials involved with gangs. The officials were not identified.</p> <p>Earlier this month, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Haitian Senate President Joseph Lambert and former Senator Youri Latortue amid allegations they abused their positions to smuggle drugs alongside gangs and directed others to engage in violence.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Pakistan, Afghan border clash; closure
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pakistan-afghan-border-crossing-closed-after-clashes-2022-11-14/
GIST	<p>QUETTA, Nov 14 (Reuters) - A major border crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan has closed for trade and transit after a clash between security force personnel from both sides, a local Pakistani official said on Monday.</p> <p>Abdul Hameed Zehri, the Deputy Commissioner of the town of Chahman, which borders the Afghan district of Spin Boldak, said the closure came after prolonged firing between security forces from both sides the day before.</p> <p>"Firing continued until late night from both sides," said Zehri, adding that trade and border crossings between Pakistan and Afghanistan had been suspended at Chahman.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the Taliban administration's interior ministry said a clash had occurred between border forces from both sides. He said it was due to a "misunderstanding" and the incident was being investigated.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the media wing of Pakistan's military said they were looking into the situation to determine what had happened.</p> <p>Zehri said the clashes had started when a man coming from the Afghan side of the border crossing had shot a Pakistani security force member, killing him and wounding others. The total number of casualties on both sides was not immediately clear.</p> <p>Hundreds of trucks containing goods were stuck waiting on both sides, locals and officials said.</p> <p>Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 2021, clashes have taken place between its security forces and those of Pakistan, while militants have attacked Pakistani forces.</p> <p>Pakistan has called on the Taliban to ensure it lives up to promises that it would not harbour international militants. The Taliban denies harbouring militants.</p> <p>Disputes linked to the border have been a bone of contention between the neighbours for decades.</p> <p>The Taliban has attempted to block Pakistan's plans to finish fencing the 2,600 km (1,615 mile) border, which was drawn by British colonial rulers with no consideration for the Pashtun tribes it divided.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Russian hackers claim hack FBI website
SOURCE	https://www.newsweek.com/russian-hackers-claim-cyberattack-fbi-website-1759373
GIST	<p>This week, pro-Russian hackers claimed responsibility for what they said was an attack on a section of the FBI's website, the newest addition to a recent string of purported attacks on U.S. government websites from Russian-aligned hackers.</p> <p>The hacking group Killnet shared a post on its Telegram page on Monday flagging an "attack" on the law enforcement resources site for the FBI. The message included a photo of what looked to be a failed attempt to enter the FBI site.</p> <p>The post was originally shared by another account called "RADIS," the bio for which mentions the "Killnet team" and the protection of Russia's cyberspace.</p> <p>In a subsequent Telegram post on Monday, RADIS wrote: "Glory to Russia and KILLNET."</p> <p>It was not immediately clear if RADIS is directly connected to or part of Killnet's collective of hackers.</p> <p>When <i>Newsweek</i> accessed the FBI site Monday morning, there did not appear to be any functional issues. Earlier on Monday, the Twitter account for Better Cyber, which describes itself as a cybersecurity services company, said that the page was not reachable and shared a screenshot that appeared to show the site's web address leading to a page it was not meant to.</p> <p><i>Newsweek</i> was not able to independently verify the purported issues on the FBI site or any involvement by pro-Russian hackers. <i>Newsweek</i> has reached out to the FBI for confirmation and comment.</p> <p>The attack, if the reports are authentic, would come roughly a month after Killnet claimed responsibility for attacks that took down websites for a handful of U.S. airports. The Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport were among those impacted, but no issues with actual airport operations were reported at the time.</p> <p>Killnet also claimed responsibility for the temporary downing of several U.S. state government websites earlier in October, as well as for a cyberattack in August against American military company Lockheed Martin.</p> <p>The recent cyberattacks have taken place in the backdrop of strained relations between Russia, the U.S. and other Western countries amid the ongoing war in Ukraine. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, the West fiercely criticized the aggression and moved quickly to impose unprecedented sanctions on Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the U.S. and other Western nations have been continuously providing aid to Ukraine throughout the more than eight months of conflict while refraining from getting directly involved in the war.</p> <p>This includes the U.S.-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) that have been repeatedly praised for their effectiveness in the fight against Russia.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 NKorea as mastermind crypto cybercrime
SOURCE	https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2022/11/how-north-korea-became-a-mastermind-of-crypto-cyber-crime/
GIST	Created by a Vietnamese gaming studio, <i>Axie Infinity</i> offers players the chance to breed, trade, and fight Pokémon-like cartoon monsters to earn cryptocurrencies including the game's own "Smooth Love Potion" digital token. At one stage, it had more than a million active players.

But earlier this year, the network of blockchains that underpin the game's virtual world was raided by a North Korean hacking syndicate, which made off with roughly \$620 million in the ether cryptocurrency.

The crypto heist, one of the largest of its kind in history, was confirmed by the FBI, which vowed to “continue to expose and combat [North Korea's] use of illicit activities—including cybercrime and cryptocurrency theft—to generate revenue for the regime.”

The successful crypto heists illustrate North Korea's growing sophistication as a malign cyber actor. Western security agencies and cyber security companies treat it as one of the world's four principal nation-state-based cyber threats, alongside China, Russia, and Iran.

According to a UN panel of experts monitoring the implementation of international sanctions, money raised by North Korea's criminal cyber operations are helping to fund the country's illicit ballistic missile and nuclear programs. Anne Neuberger, US deputy national security adviser for cyber security, said in July that North Korea “uses cyber to gain, we estimate, up to a third of their funds for their missile program.”

Crypto analysis firm Chainalysis estimates that North Korea stole approximately \$1 billion in the first nine months of 2022 from decentralized crypto exchanges alone.

The rapid collapse last week of FTX, one of the biggest exchanges, has highlighted the opacity, erratic regulation, and speculative frenzies that have been the central features of the market for digital assets. North Korea's growing use of crypto heists has also served to demonstrate the absence of meaningful international regulation of the same markets.

Analysts say the scale and sophistication of the Axie Infinity hack exposed just how powerless the US and allied countries appear to be to prevent large-scale North Korean crypto theft.

Only about \$30 million of the crypto loot has since been recovered. That was after an alliance of law enforcement agencies and crypto analysis companies traced some of the stolen funds through a series of decentralized exchanges and so-called “crypto mixers,” software tools that can shuffle the crypto holdings of different users so as to obfuscate their origins.

In one of the few law enforcement actions since the theft, in August the US sanctioned the Tornado Cash mixer, which the US Treasury said had been used by the hackers to launder more than \$450 million of their ethereum haul.

The US has since designated the crypto mixer, alleging the tool was used to support North Korean hackers who were in turn supporting the country's weapons of mass destruction program.

It also highlights the opportunities afforded by the unregulated world of crypto to many other rogue regimes and criminal actors around the world, with experts warning that the problem is likely only to get worse over the decade as crypto exchanges are increasingly decentralized and more goods and services—legal and illicit—are made available for purchase with cryptocurrency.

“We are not anywhere near where we need to be when it comes to regulating the cryptocurrency industry,” says Allison Owen, a research analyst at RUSI's Centre for Financial Crime and Security Studies. “Countries are taking steps in the right direction, but North Korea will continue finding creative ways to evade sanctions.”

Office 39

Like some of the communist regimes upon which it once depended but which it has long since outlived, North Korea's hereditary regime has a colorful history of engaging in criminal activity as a means to accumulate foreign currency.

In the 1970s North Korea's then-ruler Kim Il Sung, the grandfather of present ruler Kim Jong Un, tasked his son and successor Kim Jong Il with establishing a cell within the ruling Workers' Party of Korea to raise money for the dictatorship's founding family.

Called Office 39, it was one of several entities created by the regime to bring in billions of dollars a year from schemes ranging from producing and distributing counterfeit cigarettes and US dollar bills to selling illegal drugs, minerals, arms, and even rare animal species.

North Korean officials, diplomats, spies, and assorted operatives were all mobilized in support of this illicit shadow economy, which continues to operate through a complex network of shell companies, financial institutions, foreign brokers, and organized crime groups that facilitate the country's proliferation and sanctions evasion efforts.

Pyongyang has also spent recent decades building up its formidable cyber capabilities, a project that dates back to the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Kim regime sought to develop what was then a nascent nuclear weapons program.

Regime defectors have described how Kim Jong Il saw the value of networked computers as an efficient means to direct regime officials while remaining in seclusion. He also saw them as a platform to underpin the country's nuclear and conventional weapons development.

Kim Jong Il is quoted in a book published by the North Korean army as having said that "if the Internet is like a gun, cyberattacks are like atomic bombs." But it was only under his son Kim Jong Un, who assumed power in 2011, that the country's cyber capabilities started to garner international attention.

While less than 1 percent of the North Korean population is estimated to have restricted and closely monitored access to the Internet, potential members of the country's army of approximately 7,000 hackers are identified while still at school. They are then trained and groomed at elite government institutions, with some also receiving training and additional experience in China and other foreign countries.

"They train people who show early indications of being strong in cyber and they send them to other places around the world and embed them into organizations, embed them into the society and culture," says Erin Plante, vice president of investigations at Chainalysis. "You have these hacking cells based all around the Asia-Pacific region merging in with the rest of the tech community."

In 2014, North Korean hackers launched an attack on Sony Pictures ahead of its release of *The Interview*, a Hollywood comedy about a fictional assassination attempt on Kim Jong Un. The hack shut down the production studio's computer network before threatening executives with the release of sensitive and embarrassing internal documents.

That was followed in 2016 by a raid on Bangladesh's central bank. Members of the Lazarus Group, the same syndicate that was behind the Axie Infinity hack, broke into the bank's computer network and lurked inside it for a year before issuing instructions to the Federal Reserve Bank in New York to drain \$951 million of Bangladeshi reserves.

The money was transferred to a bank in the Philippines and was only identified because one of the orders happened to contain a word that was also the name of a sanctioned Iranian ship, alerting US authorities. The hackers ended up getting away with less than 10 percent of their haul.

North Korean hackers have also demonstrated their offensive capabilities, causing widespread chaos through ransomware attacks. In 2017, the Lazarus Group unleashed the devastating WannaCry virus, which infected at least 200,000 computers at hospitals, oil companies, banks, and other organizations around the world.

The transactions on the Axie Infinity game were supported by Ronin Network, a so-called "cross-chain bridge" that links different blockchains, that is supposed to have a high level of security. Hackers gained

access to five of nine private keys, digital compartments that contain key information allowing hackers to approve withdrawals in their favor.

According to Nils Weisensee, a cyber security expert with Seoul-based information service NK Pro, the Axie Infinity hack demonstrates how North Korean hackers can now “exploit new vulnerabilities in the latest blockchain technologies almost as quickly as they arise.”

“Just a few years ago, North Korean hackers were specializing in distributed denial-of-service attacks, which is a relatively crude method of flooding your victims’ servers with Internet traffic,” says Weisensee. “But if a DDOS attack is the cyber equivalent of beating someone with a baseball bat, then the successful raids on cross-chain bridges like Ronin and Horizon are the equivalent of stealing someone’s wallet through a hole in their pocket they didn’t even know existed.”

Analysts cite the Bangladesh Bank heist as an example of just how much more labor-intensive and time-consuming it is to target traditional financial institutions.

The North Korean hackers who infiltrated the bank’s computer network had lurked in the system for a year before executing the theft. The proceeds were transferred through several banks to casinos in Manila, where operatives then had to spend several painstaking weeks playing baccarat with the stolen money so as to swap it with unsullied cash. The clean cash was then sent to Macau, and most likely onward to North Korea.

Cryptocurrency also opens a fresh opportunity for would-be money launderers. To avoid triggering alerts on crypto exchanges by making large deposits in one go, hackers use a so-called “peel chain”—setting up a long chain of addresses and “peeling off” small amounts of digital currency with each transfer. According to a US Treasury indictment from 2020, two Chinese nationals successfully transferred \$67 million in bitcoin on behalf of North Korean hackers using this method, making 146 separate transactions between them.

“Because blockchain technology is a child of the Internet, everything you need to know about its vulnerabilities can also be found on the Internet,” says Weisensee. “All you need is smart people, and the North Koreans have that.”

According to researchers at Harvard University’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, North Korea has also been accumulating digital currencies through running its own crypto-mining operations, powered by abundant coal reserves that Pyongyang is unable to export due to UN sanctions.

The researchers note that the ethereum blockchain’s move to a much less energy-intensive “proof of stake” mechanism, while less damaging for the environment, could give energy-starved North Korea the opportunity to increase the amount of revenue it can afford to generate through crypto mining.

North Korea has also been able to exploit the rise in popularity of non-fungible tokens, or NFTs—either by artificially inflating their value using a technique known as “wash trading,” or by using NFTs to launder stolen funds, or through outright theft using spear-phishing attacks.

According to a US justice department indictment unsealed in 2021, North Korean hackers also carried out an illegal initial coin offering for a fraudulent blockchain that offered investors digital tokens in exchange for ownership of micro stakes in its shipping fleet.

Weisensee says that the dizzying pace of development of blockchain technology affords North Korean hackers constant opportunities to innovate.

“If you look at the vulnerability they exploited in the Swift financial messaging service for the Bangladesh Bank heist, that is something that could be fixed relatively easily—it would be a hard operation to repeat,” he says. “But crypto is evolving so quickly, and the North Koreans are so adept at tracking these developments, that they are regularly one step ahead of those who are trying to stop them.”

Catch me if you can

Identifying and tracking the methods deployed by North Korean hackers is difficult. Stopping them is even harder.

In 2018, US prosecutors accused a North Korean hacker, Park Jin Hyok, of carrying out the Sony, Bangladesh Bank, and WannaCry attacks, among many other operations, on behalf of the Kim regime.

“These activities run afoul of acceptable norms of behavior in cyberspace and the international community must address them,” John Demers, then assistant attorney-general in the Department of Justice’s national security division, said at the time. “Working for a foreign government does not immunize criminal conduct.”

But analysts note that neither Park, nor two more North Korean hackers identified by the US in 2021 as members of North Korea’s military intelligence agency, nor any other North Korean citizens have ever been brought to justice for their role in hacking or cyber theft operations.

The US has had more success in pursuing foreign nationals accused of assisting North Korea’s efforts.

In April, a New York court sentenced American crypto researcher Virgil Griffith to five years in prison for helping North Korea evade sanctions amid his participation in a blockchain conference in Pyongyang in 2019, while British crypto expert Christopher Emms, accused by the US of helping to organize the conference, fled after he was initially detained in Saudi Arabia earlier this year.

A Nigerian influencer known as Ray Hushpuppi received an 11-year sentence from a US court this month for conspiring to launder funds stolen by North Korean hackers from a Maltese bank in 2019.

But experts say that while Washington has taken action against a handful of entities including banks, exchanges, and crypto mixers, nothing it has done appears to have meaningfully hindered North Korea’s exploitation of the global proliferation of digital currencies.

In part, this is because of the nature of North Korea itself. Of what Demers described as America’s four “principal adversaries in cyberspace,” North Korea is the only country able or willing to mobilize its entire state apparatus in support of its global criminal operations.

“If any of the larger nations that have stronger cyber capabilities decided that they were going to use those capabilities to steal cryptocurrency, they would be far more successful than North Korea,” says Plante of Chainalysis. “But they can’t do so without damaging their ability to function in the legitimate global ecosystem.”

“Unlike China, Russia and Iran, North Korea has no stake in the global financial system, and economically speaking they have almost nothing to lose,” says Weisensee.

Last month, South Korea joined US Cyber Command’s annual multilateral cyber exercise for the first time, intensifying their cooperation in the face of North Korean cyber attacks. However, analysts also note the difficulty in retaliating against North Korean cyber operations, given how little of North Korean society and infrastructure is connected to or dependent on the Internet.

“North Korea poses a potential danger to our critical infrastructure, but it is hard to see how we can retaliate short of a total cyber war,” says Desmond Dennis, a cyber expert and former special agent with the FBI and the US Defense Intelligence Agency. “That would likely be interpreted by Pyongyang as amounting to a conventional act of war, and against a state that possesses nuclear weapons.”

But if the crypto heists have revealed something about the nature of North Korea, they have also exposed the lack of any meaningful global regulation of crypto itself.

	<p>“If we look back on sanctions in every other area of economics, they are highly matured markets that have clear regulation,” says Rohan Massey, partner at US law firm Ropes and Gray. “But crypto is a totally new asset. A lack of any real global understanding and jurisdictional regulation can be utilized quite easily.”</p> <p>Observers also note worrying trends in the industry that are likely to play into the hands of the North Koreans. They include the increasing prevalence of decentralized exchanges, which are harder for law enforcement agencies to target, and the rise of new cryptocurrencies such as monero, the use of which is much harder to track than bitcoin.</p> <p>Even with the turmoil in crypto markets, some analysts believe that an increasing number of goods and services will be purchasable using cryptocurrency. If that happens, says Weisensee, it would allow North Korea increasingly to avoid the traditional financial system altogether, reducing the “choke points” through which the US and others can exercise their leverage.</p> <p>“It’s very possible that technological advances will allow us to gain greater insight into North Korea’s operations—but stopping them is a different thing altogether,” he says. “You could already use crypto to buy missile parts on the dark web years ago—so imagine what you could buy a few years from now.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Ties between ransom groups, Russia govt?
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/critical-infrastructure/research-bolsters-evidence-of-potential-connection-between-ransomware-groups-and-russian-government
GIST	<p>While it has been a long-standing question whether there are political motivations behind ransomware attacks, new research by the Stanford Internet Observatory reveals that some Russian ransomware groups may be timing their attacks against Western nations to support Moscow's geopolitical goals.</p> <p>The research, presented at the Cyberwarcon security conference last week, analyzed the ransomware landscape in the six most-attacked countries: the United States, Canada, France, Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The dataset shows that there was an increasing number of Russia-based ransomware attacks before these countries’ national elections.</p> <p>“There is not much difference in the number of attacks between Russia based and non-Russia based groups six or five months ahead of countries’ national elections,” Karen Nershi, a researcher who led the study, told SC Media in an interview. “But we see an increasing number of Russia-based attacks starting around four months before the events [and continuing until the elections], which suggests that there may be political motivations behind those groups.”</p> <p>Regarding the trends in different sectors, the study found an elevated rate of attacks targeting government entities two months before the elections, which, according to Nershi, demonstrates that Russia might target election infrastructure to disrupt countries’ ability to hold the events. The research, though, has yet to find a significant increase in attacks against communication, finance, energy, and utility sectors before the elections.</p> <p>In addition, Nershi noted that a spillover effect from other cyber activities could also potentially explain the trend.</p> <p>“Based on the findings, we theorize that Russia maintains loose ties with ransomware groups,” Nershi said. “These Russian based groups operate as independent criminal organizations who occasionally perform favors for the government. And in exchange, Russia gives these groups a safe harbor from prosecution.”</p> <p>Nershi told SC Media that the study also comes with some limitations. First, the dataset only looks at the victims of double extortion attacks, which cannot represent the trends of other ransomware attacks. Second, as some groups operate Ransomware-as-a-Service operations with affiliates carrying out the attacks, it can be difficult to analyze the behavior of these smaller groups.</p>

	<p>However, the work does align with some previous findings.</p> <p>Research from Recorded Future last year found evidence of a loose but “symbiotic” relationship between the ransomware groups based in Russia and the government. These relationships are indirect, amorphous and “based on spoken and unspoken agreements” as well as “fluid associations.” These relationships tend to come in three different flavors: direct, a “see no evil” posture towards cybercriminal groups whose work overlaps with or is beneficial to Russian state interests, and demonstrable associations – such as recruitment – between Russian intelligence or law enforcement operatives and the cybercriminal underworld.</p> <p>While President Vladimir Putin has dismissed claims that such a relationship exists, the Russian government’s robust surveillance system gives it visibility over ransomware operations taking place within their borders, and they are also able to exercise a substantial amount of control over the resources – like local servers, hosting and other infrastructure – that these cybercriminal groups rely on to survive.</p> <p>This year shortly after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, leaked files and messages from Conti, one the most prolific ransomware group, indicated the group planned to use all possible resources to support Russian government. Dragos Q3 industrial ransomware analysis last month also reveals that ransomware trends are tied to political reasons, including the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 K-12 schools remain top target cyberattacks
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/ransomware/k-12-schools-lack-resources-remaining-top-target-for-cyberattacks
GIST	<p>The K-12 sector remains a top target for cyberattacks despite its security capabilities improving over time, according to a new report published Monday by the Center for Internet Security.</p> <p>The report noted that the education sector's cyber maturity lags behind other sectors due to limited internal resources for defense against threat actors, with nearly a fifth of K-12 schools spending less than 1% of their IT budget on cybersecurity. It also found that K-12 schools lack cybersecurity strategies, with 81% not fully implementing multi-factor authentication (MFA) and 29% not using MFA at all.</p> <p>"Many K-12 school districts are data-rich and resource-poor, making them attractive targets for financially motivated cyber threat actors, and relatively easy targets for hacktivists, those who break into a computer system for politically- or socially-motivated purposes, determined to grow their reputations and name recognition," the report read.</p> <p>The report comes two weeks after the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) hosted a national summit on K-12 school safety and security to address the complex threats facing the education sector.</p> <p>Jen Easterly, director of CISA, said during the event that ransomware is one of the most impactful and persistent threats targeting the K-12 schools and districts, which aligned with the CIS report. In response to increasingly frequent ransomware attacks, CISA recently launched an information channel to share ransomware-related resources.</p> <p>Besides ransomware threats, the report found that Shalyer and CoinMiner were two top malicious malware targeting K-12 entities over the past year. Shayler targets Apple macOS devices, functioning as a dropper for other macOS malware whose purpose is to spam victims with online ads, while CoinMiner, applies Windows Management Instrumentation to mine for coins.</p> <p>According to Easterly, those threat actors are not "discriminatory" and target schools regardless of their locations and sizes.</p> <p>"Impacts have ranged from restricted access to the network, delayed exams, canceled school days, to unauthorized access to personal information regarding students and staff," Easterly said. "[Those attacks]</p>

	<p>start at the core of the school's financial security ability to provide a safe, secure, and protected place for staff and students, and the ability to carry out the fundamental educational mission."</p> <p>CISA has worked with the Department of Homeland Security to provide guidance and tools related to school safety and security.</p> <p>The CIS report recommends that K-12 schools claim no-cost membership and join the Multi-State Information Sharing & Analysis Center to connect with peer organizations and collaborate with security professionals.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Mass email extortion campaign
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/mass-email-extortion-claims-server/
GIST	<p>Security experts have revealed a new extortion campaign threatening to leak sensitive corporate data unless a Bitcoin payment is made.</p> <p>Microsoft regional director and HaveIBeenPwned founder, Troy Hunt, revealed the unsolicited email in a social media post. It claimed that the fraudsters had hacked his site by exploiting some unnamed vulnerabilities and harvesting database credentials before extracting the “complete data” from all computers and servers.</p> <p>“We will systematically go through a series of steps to totally damage your reputation. First, your database will be leaked or sold to the highest bidder to be used for any purpose. Next, emails will be sent to all your customers, suppliers and business partners, stating that all of their information has been sold or leaked and your [web] site was at fault for leaking the information and damaging the reputation of all your customers and providers,” the message said.</p> <p>“Lastly, any links you have indexed in search engines will be de-indexed based on the black hat techniques we used in the past to de-index our targets, not to mention getting your business on every blacklist in the country.”</p> <p>The scammers then posted a Bitcoin address, demanding \$2500 within 72 hours or else they will “completely destroy your reputation with your customers, your suppliers, your partners, on Google and the entire country.”</p> <p>It’s unclear how widespread the campaign is, but the ‘Team Montesano’ group behind it are clearly hoping to cash-in on widespread news of data breach extortion groups such as the notorious Lapsus\$.</p> <p>As such, it can be filed alongside similar attempts like sextortion scams which often use small pieces of previously breached data such as legacy email passwords in an attempt to lend legitimacy to their story that they have access to the victim’s machine.</p> <p>In these emails, the individual’s website address is listed in order to personalize the scam, but there’s little else there to suggest the group’s demands should be taken seriously.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Trap: massive network of imposter domains
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/42-000-sites-used-to-trap-users-in-brand-impersonation-scheme/
GIST	<p>A malicious for-profit group named 'Fangxiao' has created a massive network of over 42,000 web domains that impersonate well-known brands to redirect users to sites promoting adware apps, dating sites, or 'free' giveaways.</p>

The imposter domains are used as part of what appears to be a massive traffic generation scheme that creates ad revenue for Fangxiao's own sites or more visitors for 'customers' who purchase traffic from the group.

According to a detailed report by [Cyjax](#), the threat actors are based out of China. They have been operating since 2017, spoofing over 400 renowned brands from the retail, banking, travel, pharmaceuticals, transport, financial, and energy sector.

Examples given in the report include Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Knorr, Unilever, Shopee, Emirates, and more, with many fake sites featuring extensive localization options.

Often, Fangxiao victims are redirected to sites that infect them with the [Triada trojan](#) or other malware. However, a connection between the operators of these sites and Fangxiao has yet to be established.

Profit factory

To generate massive traffic for its customers and its own sites, Fangxiao registers approximately 300 new brand impersonation domains daily.

Since the start of March 2022, the malicious operators have used at least 24,000 landing and survey domains to promote their fake prizes to victims.

Most of these sites use the ".top" TLD, followed by ".cn", ".cyou", ".xyz", ".work", and ".tech". The sites are hidden behind Cloudflare and registered through GoDaddy, Namecheap, and Wix.

Users arrive on these sites through mobile advertisements or after receiving a WhatsApp message containing the link, typically making a special offer or informing the recipient they won something.

These landing domains redirect visitors to a survey domain with a timer that adds urgency to help keep the victims concentrated away from the signs of fraud.

In some cases, completing the survey leads to downloading an app, which the victim is requested to launch and keep open for at least thirty seconds, likely to allow enough time to register a new user from a Fangxiao referral.

The landing sites also host advertisements from ylliX, which Google and Facebook have marked as "suspicious" while clicking on them results in a separate redirection chain.

The redirection path depends on the user's location (IP address) and user agent, leading to Triada trojan downloads, Amazon via affiliate links, fake dating sites, and SMS micropayment scams.

Redirection chain leading to Triada infection (Cyjax)

Another observed destination of the Fangxiao campaign is the Play Store page of the 'App Booster Lite – RAM Booster' app, a performance booster for Android devices with over 10 million downloads.

Cyjax says the app does not feature malicious functionality, but it asks users to approve access to risky permissions, and it serves above average amount of ads through hard-to-close popups.

The app's publisher, LocoMind, shares an IP address with another app developer named Holacode, who has been previously linked to adware distribution.

A full list of domains found by Cyjax to be used in this campaign can be [found here](#).

Conclusion

Cyjax's investigation yielded several indications that Fangxiao is a Chinese operator, like using Mandarin on one of the exposed controlled panels.

	<p>However, apart from some email addresses linked to hacking forums like OGUsers, there are no further clues about the identity of the threat actors.</p> <p>Also, it is currently unknown if this massive baiting operation using many fake sites to draw victims is related to the final destinations or if Fangxiao is merely collaborating with those sites to make a profit.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Whoosh confirms data breach
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/whoosh-confirms-data-breach-after-hackers-sell-72m-user-records/
GIST	<p>The Russian scooter-sharing service Whoosh has confirmed a data breach after hackers started to sell a database containing the details of 7.2 million customers on a hacking forum.</p> <p>Whoosh is Russia's leading urban mobility service platform, operating in 40 cities with over 75,000 scooters.</p> <p>On Friday, a threat actor began selling the stolen data on a hacking forum, which allegedly contains promotion codes that can be used to access the service for free, as well as partial user identification and payment card data.</p> <p>The company confirmed the cyberattack via statements on Russian media earlier this month but claimed that its IT experts had managed to thwart it successfully.</p> <p>In a new statement shared with RIA Novosti today, Whoosh admits that there is a data leak and informs its user base they are working with law enforcement authorities to take all measures to stop the distribution of the data.</p> <p>"The leak did not affect sensitive user data, such as account access, transaction information, or travel details," stated a Whoosh spokesperson.</p> <p>"Our security procedures also exclude the possibility of third parties gaining access to full payment data of users' bank cards."</p> <p>What's for sale</p> <p>On Friday, a user on the 'Breached' hacking forums posted a database containing details about 7.2 million Whoosh customers, including email addresses, phone numbers, and first names.</p> <p>The database also contained partial payment card details for a subset of 1,900,000 users.</p> <p>The seller also claimed that the stolen data included 3,000,000 promo codes, which people can use to rent Whoosh scooters without paying.</p> <p>The seller says they are selling the data to only five buyers for \$4,200 each, or .21490980 bitcoins, and according to the SatoshiDisk platform used for the transaction, no one has yet to purchase the database.</p> <p>In a separate sale of the data on Telegram, the threat actor claims it was stolen during a November 2022 attack on Whoosh.</p> <p>Russian database leaks</p> <p>According to an August 2022 report from Roskomnadzor, Russia's internet watchdog, there were 40 confirmed Russian company data breaches since the beginning of the year.</p> <p>In September 2022, Group-IB published a report claiming to have observed 140 database sales stolen from Russian companies this summer alone, with the total number of exposed records reaching 304 million.</p>

	The most notable leak, in terms of its impact this year, was that of the food delivery app Yandex Food , which led to multiple collateral data exposures .
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/15 Chinese hackers target govt. agencies
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/chinese-hackers-target-government-agencies-and-defense-orgs/
GIST	<p>A cyberespionage threat actor tracked as Billbug (a.k.a. Thrip, Lotus Blossom, Spring Dragon) has been running a campaign targeting a certificate authority, government agencies, and defense organizations in several countries in Asia.</p> <p>The most recent attacks were observed since at least March but the actor has been operating stealthily for more than a decade and it is believed to be a state-sponsored group working for China.</p> <p>Its operations have been documented by multiple cybersecurity companies over the past six years [1, 2, 3].</p> <p>Security researchers at Symantec say in a report today that Billbug, who they've been tracking since 2018, also targeted a certificate authority company, which would have allowed them to deploy signed malware to make it more difficult to detect or to decrypt HTTPS traffic.</p> <p>New campaign, old tools</p> <p>Symantec hasn't determined how Billbug gains initial access to the target networks but they have seen evidence of this happening by exploiting public-facing apps with known vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Like in previous campaigns attributed to Billbug, the actor combines tools that are already present on the target system, publicly available utilities, and custom malware. Among them are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AdFind • Winmail • WinRAR • Ping • Tracert • Route • NBTscan • Certutil • Port Scanner <p>These tools help hackers blend with innocuous daily activity, avoid suspicious log traces or raising alarms on security tools, and generally make attribution efforts harder.</p> <p>A more rarely deployed open-source tool seen in recent Billbug operations is Stowaway, a Go-based multi-level proxy tool that helps pentesters bypass network access restrictions.</p> <p>Symantec was able to pin the recent attacks to Billbug because the threat actor used two custom backdoors seen in some of their previous operations: Hannotog and Sagerunex.</p> <p>Some functionalities of the Hannotog backdoor include changing firewall settings to enable all traffic, establish persistence on the compromised machine, upload encrypted data, run CMD commands, and download files to the device.</p> <p>Sagerunex is dropped by Hannotog and injects itself in an "explorer.exe" process. It then writes logs on a local temp file encrypted using the AES algorithm (256-bit).</p> <p>The backdoor's configuration and state are also stored locally and encrypted with RC4, with the keys for both being hardcoded into the malware.</p>

	Sagerunex connects to the command and command server via HTTPS to send a list of active proxies and files, and receives payloads and shell commands from the operators. Moreover, it can execute programs and DLLs using “runexe” and “rundll.”
	Billbug continues to use the same custom backdoors with minimal changes over the past years.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 New dangerous BatLoader malware dropper
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/researchers-alarm-batloader-malware-dropper
GIST	<p>A dangerous new malware loader with features for determining whether it's on a business system or a personal computer has begun rapidly infecting systems worldwide over the past few months.</p> <p>Researchers at VMware Carbon Black are tracking the threat, dubbed BatLoader, and say its operators are using the dropper to distribute a variety of malware tools including a banking Trojan, an information stealer, and the Cobalt Strike post-exploit toolkit on victim systems. The threat actor's tactic has been to host the malware on compromised websites and lure users to those sites using search engine optimization (SEO) poisoning methods.</p> <p>Living Off the Land</p> <p>BatLoader relies heavily on batch and PowerShell scripts to gain an initial foothold on a victim machine and to download other malware onto it. This has made the campaign hard to detect and block, especially in the early stages, analysts from VMware Carbon Black's managed detection and response (MDR) team said in a report released on Nov. 14.</p> <p>VMware said its Carbon Black MDR team had observed 43 successful infections in the last 90 days, in addition to numerous other unsuccessful attempts where a victim downloaded the initial infection file but did not execute it. Nine of the victims were organizations in the business services sector, seven were financial services companies, and five were in manufacturing. Other victims included organizations in the education, retail, IT, and healthcare sectors.</p> <p>On Nov. 9, eSentire said its threat-hunting team had observed BatLoader's operator luring victims to websites masquerading as download pages for popular business software such as LogMeIn, Zoom, TeamViewer, and AnyDesk. The threat actor distributed links to these websites via ads that showed up prominently in search engine results when users searched for any of these software products.</p> <p>The security vendor said that in one late October incident, an eSentire customer arrived at a fake LogMeIn download page and downloaded a Windows installer that, among other things, profiles the system and uses the information to retrieve a second-stage payload.</p> <p>"What makes BatLoader interesting is that it has logic built into it that determines if the victim computer is a personal computer or a corporate computer," says Keegan Keplinger, research and reporting lead with eSentire's TRU research team. "It then drops the type of malware appropriate for the situation."</p> <p>Selective Payload Delivery</p> <p>For example, if BatLoader hits a personal computer, it downloads Ursnif banking malware and the Vidar information stealer. If it hits a domain-joined or corporate computer, it downloads Cobalt Strike and the Syncro remote monitoring and management tool, in addition to the banking Trojan and information stealer.</p> <p>"If BatLoader lands on a personal computer, it will proceed with fraud, infostealing, and banking-based payloads like Ursnif," Keegan says. "If BatLoader detects that it's in an organizational environment, it will proceed with intrusion tools like Cobalt Strike and Syncro."</p> <p>Keegan says eSentire has observed "a lot" of recent cyberattacks involving BatLoader. Most of the attacks are opportunistic and hit anyone looking for trusted and popular free software tools.</p>

"To get in front of organizations, BatLoader leverages poisoned ads so that when employees look for trusted free software, like LogMeIn and Zoom, they instead land on sites controlled by attackers, delivering BatLoader."

Overlaps With Conti, ZLoader

VMware Carbon Black said that while there are several aspects of the BatLoader campaign that are unique, there are also several attributes of the attack chain that have a resemblance with the [Conti ransomware operation](#).

The overlaps include an IP address that the Conti group used in a campaign leveraging the Log4j vulnerability, and the use of a remote management tool called Atera that Conti has used in previous operations.

In addition to the similarities with Conti, BatLoader also has several overlaps with [Zloader, a banking Trojan](#) that appears derived from the Zeus banking Trojan of the early 2000s, the security vendor said. The biggest similarities there include the use of SEO poisoning to lure victims to malware-laden websites, the use of Windows Installer for establishing an initial foothold and the use of PowerShell, batch scripts, and other native OS binaries during the attack chain.

Mandiant was the first to report on BatLoader. In a blog post in February, the security vendor reported observing a threat actor using "free productivity apps installation" and "free software development tools installation" themes as SEO keywords to lure users to download sites.

"This initial BatLoader compromise was the [beginning of a multi-stage infection chain](#) that provides the attackers with a foothold inside the target organization," Mandiant said. The attackers used every stage to set up the next phase of the attack chain using tools such as PowerShell, Msiexec.exe, and Mshta.exe to evade detection.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 CISA alert: unpatched Zimbra platforms
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/unpatched-zimbra-platforms-probably-compromised-cisa-says
GIST	<p>Security teams running unpatched, Internet-connected Zimbra Collaboration Suites (ZCS) should just go ahead and assume compromise, and take immediate detection and response action.</p> <p>That's according to a new alert issued by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, which flagged active Zimbra exploits for CVE-2022-24682, CVE-2022-27924, CVE-2022-27925, which are being chained with CVE-2022-37042, and CVE-2022-30333. The attacks lead to remote code execution and access to the Zimbra platform.</p> <p>The result could be quite risky when it comes to shielding sensitive information and preventing email-based follow-on threats: ZCS is a suite of business communications services that includes an email server and a Web client for accessing messages via the cloud.</p> <p>CISA, along with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), provided detection details and indicators of compromise (IoCs) to help security teams.</p> <p>"Cyber-threat actors may be targeting unpatched ZCS instances in both government and private sector networks," according to a Zimbra advisory.</p> <p>CISA and the MS-ISAC strongly urged users and administrators to apply the guidance in the Recommendations section of this Cybersecurity Advisory to help secure their organization's systems against malicious cyberactivity.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 French tech firm denies getting hacked
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/thales-denies-getting-hacked-ransomware-gang-releases-gigabytes-data?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>French aerospace, defense, and security giant Thales claims to have found no evidence of its IT systems getting breached after a well-known ransomware group published gigabytes of data allegedly stolen from the company.</p> <p>The cybercrime group LockBit last week published a 9.5 Gb archive file apparently containing information belonging to Thales. The malicious hackers previously announced that they would make files public unless Thales paid a ransom.</p> <p>The leaked files seem to include both technical and corporate documents. The hackers claim to have obtained highly sensitive information related to the company's operations, as well as "commercial documents, accounting files, customer files, drawings of clients structures, [and] softwares".</p> <p><u>Thales did confirm that a breach had occurred</u>, just not of its own systems. Its security experts are aware of two likely sources of the theft. One of them has been confirmed to be the user account of a partner on a dedicated collaboration portal, which resulted in the disclosure of "a limited amount of information".</p> <p>"Thales reiterates that, as of now, there is no impact on the Group's operations," the company said. "Thales is working closely with its partner and is providing all of the necessary technical support and resources to minimise any potential impact to concerned customers and stakeholders."</p> <p>French publication LeMonde reported that the <u>leaked data is related</u> to Thales contracts and partnerships in Malaysia and Italy.</p> <p>The LockBit gang recently also announced <u>targeting car parts giant Continental</u>. The company announced being targeted in a cyberattack in August, but it only recently came to light that the ransomware group was behind the intrusion.</p> <p>The cybercriminals claim to have stolen 40Gb of files and they are offering to sell it for \$50 million after negotiations with Continental apparently failed.</p> <p>LockBit is one of the most active ransomware operations, leaking data from hundreds of organizations since its launch in 2019.</p> <p>Authorities last week announced that a Russian national living in Canada had been <u>arrested</u> for his alleged role in LockBit ransomware attacks. The suspect was described as an "operator", but he may actually be an affiliate and his arrest will likely not cause too much disruption to the LockBit enterprise.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 UK shoppers lost \$18M to scammers 2021
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/uk-shoppers-15m-scammers-last/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>Online shoppers lost an average of £1000 each last year over the busy Christmas shopping period, according to new figures, prompting experts to urge greater caution over the coming three months.</p> <p>The figures cited by the National Cyber Security Centre (<u>NCSC</u>) on November, 14 come from cases reported to <u>Action Fraud</u> and so are likely to under-represent the true scale of fraud losses over the period.</p> <p>Even so, they stand at a total of £15.3m lost between November 2021 and January 2022, with younger shoppers more likely to fall victim. Nearly half (47%) of those scammed were 19 to 25-year-olds.</p>

The data revealed some interesting insights into current fraud trends. Around half of the 20,000 incidents reported to Action Fraud involved a social media site, while 20% related to the purchase of electronics and 13% to mobile phones.

The third most common category was vehicles, accounting for 8% of reports. One victim lost more than £7000 trying to purchase a camper van online, the NCSC said.

“Online shoppers will understandably be looking for bargains during the Black Friday and Christmas shopping period and we want them to do so safely,” said NCSC CEO, [Lindy Cameron](#).

“Sadly we know that criminals will look to exploit consumers at this time of year which is why good cybersecurity has such an important role to play. I would urge everyone to help us fight the scammers by following our [Cyber Aware](#) advice to set up two-step verification and use three random words passwords.”

The NCSC also urged consumers to think more carefully about where they shop online, researching any unfamiliar web stores to check they’re legitimate – such as by looking for feedback and reviews from trusted sources.

It advised shoppers to use a credit card when paying for goods online, as most schemes provide buyer protections, and if details are stolen then at least the victim’s bank account details won’t be exposed.

The security agency added that users should always look for a closed padlock in the address bar when buying online: if there isn’t one displayed, the connection is not secure and card data may be stolen.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Layoff spree spells end of era for Big Tech
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/11/12/tech-facebook-twitter-layoffs-dotcom/
GIST	<p>Over the past week, Silicon Valley companies have laid off 20,000 employees, a swift ramp-up of the job cuts and hiring freezes that have been ricocheting through the tech industry for months.</p> <p>Twitter, Facebook parent Meta, payment platform Stripe, software service firm Salesforce, ride-hailing company Lyft and a growing list of smaller companies all laid off double-digit percentages of their workers. That means tens of thousands of engineers, salespeople and support staff in one of the country’s most important and highest-paying industries are out of a job. Meanwhile, other companies including Google and Amazon have recently instated hiring slowdowns and freezes. A New York Times report Monday said Amazon is planning to lay off about 10,000 employees.</p> <p>The departures are solidifying a feeling in Silicon Valley that the bull market of the past decade — which created massive amounts of wealth for tech investors, workers and the broader economy — is decidedly over, conjuring an image of what the rest of the economy could experience if a predicted recession materializes.</p> <p>“It does feel a little like 2000,” said Lise Buyer, a longtime tech analyst, executive and investor, referring to the turn-of-the-century dot-com crash. “Hire engineers, hire engineers, hire engineers, and then suddenly companies get a cold bucket of water in their face.”</p> <p>Executives at the companies making the cuts blamed a variety of interconnected factors — overzealous hiring during the pandemic, a slowdown in e-commerce activity and people spending less time online as in-person events return. Tech CEOs have been warning about a looming recession for months, telling their employees to expect tougher working conditions and drastically slowing down the rapid growth they had preached for years.</p> <p>When it comes to newer tech companies, low interest rates over the past decade have allowed venture capitalists to easily raise money and pour it into new start-ups — even if their founders didn’t have solid plans for actually making money.</p>

During the pandemic, that dynamic went into overdrive. At the same time, bigger tech companies expanded rapidly to take advantage of people spending more time online. Tech share prices soared, boosting confidence and stock-based payouts for workers.

But now that the Federal Reserve is aggressively raising interest rates to fight inflation, venture capitalists are being stingier with their investments, forcing companies to focus more on profitability than growth. Tech giants are doing the same, as higher prices cut into their revenue, forcing them to cut costs.

The layoffs come just a year after Silicon Valley was at its peak, with valuations of Big Tech companies spilling into the trillions, salaries at all-time highs and cryptocurrencies pouring new wealth into the pockets of investors and workers alike. Now, tens of thousands of workers are looking for work.

Marc Weil taught himself how to code when he was 9 years old, and has worked in tech since 2010 at various companies, even founding his own start-up at one point. This week, the 35-year-old engineering manager at Stripe was one of thousands who lost their jobs.

“Year after year goes by and the tech economy keeps getting bigger and bigger with no end in sight,” Weil said. “Everyone in tech has been warned by people who lived through the last few decades that this will end. And so it ended.”

Weil bought a house just three weeks before the layoffs. But he’s not too worried about finding a new job, thanks to the network he’s built up over 10 years in the Valley. He’s more concerned about his younger colleagues.

Spokespeople for Lyft, Twitter, Facebook, Amazon and Google did not return requests for comment. A spokesperson for Stripe referred to a blog post the company’s CEO had made about the layoffs.

“We are facing stubborn inflation, energy shocks, higher interest rates, reduced investment budgets, and sparser start-up funding,” CEO Patrick Collison said in the post. Salesforce spokeswoman Annie Vincent said the company is supporting its workers who were laid off.

For the past 10 years, Big Tech companies have ruled the U.S. economy. Apple, Amazon, Google and Microsoft all broke the trillion-dollar valuation mark, becoming by far the most valuable organizations in modern history. They competed with venture-funded start-ups such as Uber, WeWork, Airbnb and Stripe for tech and business talent, driving up salaries and the cost of living in the Bay Area and other tech hubs like Seattle.

But over the past year, cracks have begun to form in that dominance. The companies’ leaders began warning of cutbacks, and firms such as Google, Microsoft and Facebook quietly instituted hiring slowdowns. Over the summer, as economic sentiment whipped back and forth between positive and negative, the companies also provided mixed messages.

The past few weeks have triggered a deeper level of concern, as a wave of earnings reports showed that even the most stalwart companies such as Amazon and Google are having serious trouble keeping up the revenue growth they were able to show off over the past several years.

Share prices for Facebook and Amazon fell more than 20 percent when they reported their quarterly earnings the final week of October. Amazon’s forecast for the all-important holiday season was below what analysts had expected, and Facebook investors began ditching the company in droves after chief executive Mark Zuckerberg made clear he intended to keep losing money as the company pivots to focusing on building a new “metaverse” virtual world.

Microsoft and Google, the No. 3 and No. 4 most valuable firms in the world respectively after Apple and Saudi Aramco, also reported slowdowns in revenue growth, showing that demand for digital ads and cloud software is falling.

Last week, Twitter under its new owner Elon Musk laid off around half of the company's 7,500 employees. Musk said Thursday the company would need to find new sources of revenue or it would not "survive the upcoming economic downturn."

His statement came a day after Zuckerberg said the "macroeconomic downturn" was one of the reasons he needed to fire 11,000 workers, or 13 percent of Meta's workforce, in the first wide-scale job cuts in its 18-year history.

Stripe is cutting 14 percent of its staff, real estate marketplace Zillow 5 percent and ride-hailing app Lyft 13 percent.

The week's layoffs bring the total number of displaced tech employees in 2022 to just over 120,000, according to Layoffs.fyi, a layoff tracker run by tech founder Roger Lee.

Tech workers who previously could have counted on dozens of offers for their skills will now have to compete for jobs with thousands of other people.

Sarah Cho, 23, graduated from UCLA this year and was just months into her first job as a product manager at Lyft when she got her layoff notice.

"It's a very saturated market right now, there's only a handful of roles that are available," Cho said. She's a Korean citizen, so being on a visa is making the situation harder, she said. "It gets to a point where you are just looking for whatever's available."

The cuts contrast with other key economic indicators, which show a mixed picture of the economy. Inflation was not as high as analysts had expected in October, triggering hope that the Fed's interest rate hikes are working as intended and may not need to be increased. The overall economy added 261,000 jobs in October, and, countrywide, companies classified as computer systems design by the government actually added some jobs.

Economists from Goldman Sachs said they expect U.S. wages to continue to rise in 2023, though home prices could fall, according to a Nov. 6 note to clients. Barclays economists predict a "shallow recession" next year, the bank said in a Nov. 9 research note.

Still, the layoffs in Silicon Valley will have a growing effect, said Julia Pollak, chief economist at ZipRecruiter, a job search site. Tech companies spend a lot of money on other tech services, such as cloud computing or communications platforms, as well as digital advertising.

"We could either see this have a ripple effect through the economy, or an avalanche. The question is how people react and how they perceive this," she said.

The cuts likely aren't over yet.

"We're almost certain to see more," Pollack said. "Tech companies will be under increased pressure to cut costs and become profitable sooner."

By 2020, the tech industry made up about 10.2 percent of U.S. GDP, [according to](#) the U.S. Department of Commerce. The seemingly endless growth of companies such as Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Facebook, Netflix, Tesla, Salesforce and others has padded the retirement accounts of millions of Americans as tech firms took up an increasingly big share of the stock market. Tech companies made up [nearly 30 percent](#) of the total value of the S&P 500 in March.

During the pandemic, tech companies grew even faster, as people spent more time online, bought more computers and video game consoles and shifted much of their shopping from in-store retailers to e-commerce. Tech companies took advantage of that shift, investing billions of dollars in hiring new workers and building new data centers to take advantage of what was seen as a once-in-a-lifetime shift. But as pandemic restrictions eased and most people returned to their pre-pandemic habits, the bet that that behavior would be permanently altered fell flat.

The leaders of Facebook and Shopify, which makes tools for merchants to sell online, explicitly blamed their layoffs on overestimating this shift to e-commerce. “This obviously didn’t play out the way that I expected or that any of us hoped,” Zuckerberg told employees during a call on Wednesday, according to a recording shared with The Washington Post.

The layoffs this week have cut back head count in Silicon Valley significantly, but most big companies still have more staff than they did in 2019. Still, the rapid reversal of a trend that had led to so much hiring and investment is having a big emotional impact, as people compare reality with the inflated expectations they had built up, said Buyer, who was a tech analyst during the dot-com crash and more recently has advised companies on structuring their initial public offerings.

“That’s why the sort of mood is so shocked and disappointed,” she said.

For years, skilled tech workers jumped between companies, leveraging one job to get a higher salary at another. For entry-level engineers, it was not unusual to get offers of \$200,000 a year plus a signing bonus from Big Tech firms. Tech companies offered perks such as free catered meals, massages, dog walkers and on-site laundry, plus unlimited vacation days. With so many recently laid off workers out in the market now, that will change.

Rene Ronquillo, 37, worked his way up from being a Lyft driver to a full-time job at the company as a recruiter. He expects a lot of workers will have to take pay cuts or find roles below their level of experience if they want to get a new job in this environment.

“I can’t be too picky,” he said.

Semil Shah, a general partner at venture capital firm Haystack, estimates there may be as many as 25,000 to 50,000 out-of-work tech people on the Bay Area job market over the next few months. Salaries will go down, and people will take jobs they might not have considered earlier.

In the long term, the current shock could be a good thing, Shah said. For years, start-ups have struggled to compete with bigger tech companies for engineers, and the old-school ethos of working for a low start-up salary in the hope that the company will make it big and provide a large payout has eroded, he said.

“It seems like a very nasty correction that most insiders feel like is probably a healthy thing, as painful as it is,” Shah said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Tech layoffs create anxiety, opportunity
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/business/for-seattle-layoffs-at-amazon-meta-and-across-tech-a-mixed-blessing/
GIST	<p>With tech layoffs mounting by the week — including as many as 10,000 at Amazon, according to one media report — Seattle area workers and employers face a loaded economic question.</p> <p>Do the cuts represent a temporary adjustment to a post-pandemic slowdown? Or has an industry that almost single-handedly fueled the Seattle area’s economic boom over the last decade finally peaked?</p> <p>In either case, the layoffs have punctured the Seattle-area tech sector’s image as unstoppable.</p>

“I think it definitely has an effect on the psyche,” said one Seattle Amazon worker, referring to a [report Monday by The New York Times that the company is considering 10,000 or so layoffs](#). The worker, who asked not to be identified because they weren’t authorized to comment, added that staff was still waiting to hear whether the reported layoffs were underway and which teams would be affected.

Amazon hasn’t commented on The Times’ report, or a similar report Friday by The Wall Street Journal. But the cuts, if confirmed, would be only the latest in a series of layoffs and hiring freezes in the Seattle-area tech sector.

Microsoft, Twitter and Redfin all recently have made cuts or intend to make cuts in their Seattle-area workforces. Plans by Facebook parent company Meta to slash 726 positions in Seattle and Bellevue were confirmed Monday by the state Employment Security Department.

Economists say the recent layoffs were likely inevitable.

After enjoying stunning growth in demand during the pandemic, many of tech’s biggest players are now grappling with a return to more normal demand coupled with the impact of higher interest rates and the looming threat of recession.

“It’s not necessarily surprising that some of that demand has diminished and wasn’t necessarily sustainable in the long run,” said Anneliese Vance-Sherman, an Employment Security Department regional economist who covers the Seattle-area job market. “And here we are.”

Some tech companies have blamed the cooling housing market for cuts. Seattle-based Redfin, a brokerage and listing site, [announced this month](#) it would lay off [862](#) employees nationwide, including 75 in Washington, and shut down its house-flipping business. That followed an earlier cut of 470 jobs nationwide in [June](#). Redfin employed roughly 6,500 workers late last year.

Economists and other market experts caution that it’s too early to know whether recent layoffs portend a broader slowdown in the tech industry, which as recently as September was adding thousands of jobs a month, state data shows. And many of the recently announced layoffs won’t show up in state employment data for several months.

More broadly, despite the size of some recent layoffs, all job cuts announced so far represent only a tiny fraction of the region’s tech workforce. State data shows more than 160,000 workers at Seattle-area firms, and more than 190,000 statewide, at companies focused on information technology.

Amazon alone had around 75,000 workers in the Seattle area as of 2021, up from 53,500 in 2019, said Jacob Vigdor, an economist with the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy, who follows state and local job markets.

“The most amazing thing about the Amazon layoff [report] is how small that number looks in relation to what has become the company’s gargantuan size, and its rapid growth,” said Vigdor. Even if all 10,000 of Amazon’s reported layoffs were confined to Washington state, Vigdor said, “it would only be taking their local employment head count back about a year or so.”

A hiring slowdown by Big Tech could even be good news for some smaller tech firms that have struggled to compete for tech talent in a labor market that remains extremely tight.

“Having a large talent pool is always an opportunity for us,” said Corby Casler, spokesman for Redmond-based business technology firm Denali Advanced Integration, which plans to add 25% more staff in each of the next five years and hired more than 200 last year. “We are growing, hiring and believe layoffs are a mistake.”

That opportunistic attitude is echoed by many nontech employers that also need tech talent to manage the growing digital parts of their operations.

“If these tech companies pull back, I would love to hire some of their workers,” said Brent Beardall, CEO at Seattle-based WaFd Bank, who sees similar appetite for tech talent at local firms that aren’t part of the traditional tech space.

The current layoffs have grabbed a lot of attention because they’re at “companies that you traditionally associate as a bellwether of the tech industry — but the tech industry has expanded far beyond those tech giants,” said Megan Slabinski, who oversees regional hiring for technology, marketing and creative roles with the Seattle office of recruiter Robert Half.

As painful as layoffs can be for individuals, Slabinski added, “letting some talent back in the market isn’t a horrible thing because the demand is still so high.”

That’s already showing up for some tech workers.

Laid-off employees at Twitter and Meta, for example, have created groups online to connect with recruiters and get leads on job openings. So far, the opportunities are coming from small to midsize companies instead of Big Tech, according to a laid-off Twitter employee, who requested anonymity because they’re seeking jobs at tech companies.

“The companies you would expect to call back like Apple or Microsoft seem to be holding back,” they said, “but companies like Remitly or Shopify are actively hiring.”

Still, Slabinski and other industry watchers acknowledge that the Seattle-area job market isn’t what it was even a year ago.

While there are still many openings for engineering, security, networking and cloud computing jobs, employers may not feel the need to make the kind of “ludicrous” compensation offers they did in previous years, Slabinski said.

Employers may also feel less pressure to allow so much remote work, says Josh Wong, a recruiter manager at Addison Group, a professional services firm with offices in Seattle.

Some recruiters also think hiring could slow or stop entirely at local tech startups, in part as their investors pull back.

For tech workers themselves, it all adds up to a lot of uncertainty

“I think it definitely has an effect on the psyche,” said the Amazon worker, who added that staff was still waiting to hear whether the reported layoffs were underway and which teams would be affected.

While total layoff numbers remain small relative to the broader sector, they’ve already been enough to blunt the sense of unstoppable momentum many Seattle tech workers took as a given even a year ago.

At Twitter, where entire teams were wiped out with the layoffs, those who remained are looking to leave, the former Twitter employee said.

But at other firms, the Amazon news fed a growing sense of caution among workers who in some cases had known only steady growth and endless opportunity.

At Google, an employee in the company’s Seattle cloud operation said colleagues who used to routinely scan openings at other companies now seemed more focused on keeping their current role.

“I’ve heard some people go, ‘OK, you know, I’m going to try harder with my current job,’” the employee said.

HEADLINE	11/14 Google settles location tracking probe
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/40-states-settle-google-location-tracking-charges-392m-93274418
GIST	<p>HARTFORD, Conn. -- Search giant Google has agreed to a \$391.5 million settlement with 40 states to resolve an investigation into how the company tracked users' locations, state attorneys general announced Monday.</p> <p>The states' investigation was sparked by a 2018 Associated Press story, which found that Google continued to track people's location data even after they opted out of such tracking by disabling a feature the company called "location history."</p> <p>The attorneys general called the settlement a historic win for consumers, and the largest multistate settlement in U.S history dealing with privacy.</p> <p>It comes at a time of mounting unease over privacy and surveillance by tech companies that has drawn growing outrage from politicians and scrutiny from regulators. The Supreme Court's ruling in June ending the constitutional protections for abortion raised potential privacy concerns for women seeking the procedure or related information online.</p> <p>"This \$391.5 million settlement is a historic win for consumers in an era of increasing reliance on technology," Connecticut Attorney General William Tong said in a statement. "Location data is among the most sensitive and valuable personal information Google collects, and there are so many reasons why a consumer may opt-out of tracking."</p> <p>At a news conference, Tong urged consumers to "do a little personal inventory" of their online settings and turn them off if they don't want them.</p> <p>"It is not an exaggeration to say that we live in a surveillance economy," he said. "Understand that you're being tracked every minute of every day where you are."</p> <p>Google, based in Mountain View, California, said it fixed the problems several years ago.</p> <p>"Consistent with improvements we've made in recent years, we have settled this investigation, which was based on outdated product policies that we changed years ago," company spokesperson Jose Castaneda said.</p> <p>Location tracking can help tech companies sell digital ads to marketers looking to connect with consumers within their vicinity. It's another tool in a data-gathering toolkit that generates more than \$200 billion in annual ad revenue for Google, accounting for most of the profits pouring into the coffers of its corporate parent, Alphabet — which has a market value of \$1.2 trillion.</p> <p>In its 2018 story, The AP reported that many Google services on Android devices and iPhones store users' location data even if they've used a privacy setting that says it will prevent Google from doing so. Computer-science researchers at Princeton confirmed these findings at the AP's request.</p> <p>Storing such data carries privacy risks and has been used by police to determine the location of suspects.</p> <p>The AP reported that the privacy issue with location tracking affected some 2 billion users of devices that run Google's Android operating software and hundreds of millions of worldwide iPhone users who rely on Google for maps or search.</p> <p>The attorneys general who investigated Google said a key part of the company's digital advertising business is location data, which they called the most sensitive and valuable personal data the company collects. Even a small amount of location data can reveal a person's identity and routines, they said.</p>

	<p>Google uses the location information to target consumers with ads by its customers, the state officials said.</p> <p>The attorneys general said Google misled users about its location tracking practices since at least 2014, violating state consumer protection laws.</p> <p>As part of the settlement, Google also agreed to make those practices more transparent to users. That includes showing them more information when they turn location account settings on and off and keeping a webpage that gives users information about the data Google collects.</p> <p>The shadowy surveillance brought to light by The AP troubled even some Google engineers, who recognized the company might be confronting a huge legal headache after the story was published, according to internal documents that have subsequently surfaced in consumer-fraud lawsuits.</p> <p>Tong, the Connecticut AG, thanked the AP for its story, which he said “set the table for the investigation by the states” and helped expose the tracking practices.</p> <p>He said a new Connecticut consumer-privacy law set to take effect next year will require that people opt into any location tracking, and not have to turn it off.</p> <p>Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich filed the first state action against Google in May 2020, alleging that the company had defrauded its users by misleading them into believing they could keep their whereabouts private by turning off location tracking in the settings of their software.</p> <p>Arizona settled its case with Google for \$85 million last month, but by then attorneys general in several other states and the District of Columbia had also pounced on the company with their own lawsuits seeking to hold Google accountable for its alleged deception.</p>
	Return to Top

Terrorism, Extremism

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Turkey minister: US complicit in bombing
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/turkey-attack-united-states/2022/11/14/id/1096336/
GIST	<p>Turkey Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly rejected U.S. condolences after a deadly weekend bombing attack in Istanbul, accusing Washington of complicity.</p> <p>According to Axios, after the Biden administration expressed condolences on Monday, Soyly said that was like "the murderer arriving as one of the first at the scene of the crime."</p> <p>On Sunday, six people were killed and over 80 wounded in Istanbul's crowded Beyoglu shopping district.</p> <p>Earlier reports mentioned Turkish authorities claiming Kurdish militants in Syria sent the arrested suspect to commit the attack. Soyly suggested the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Kurdish groups the Turkish government views as arms of the same terrorist group, were responsible.</p> <p>The PKK denied involvement, adding it does not target civilians. An SDF spokesperson later also denied any involvement in the attack.</p> <p>In the past, Washington outraged its Turkish allies by working closely with SDF to combat ISIS. The United States regards the PKK as a terrorist organization. The PKK, which advocates for Kurdish independence, has a long history of conducting attacks in Turkey.</p> <p>After the attack, the White House released a statement on Sunday, saying: "We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our NATO Ally Turkey in countering terrorism."</p>

HEADLINE	11/15 Boko Haram kills women over witchcraft
SOURCE	https://www.dawn.com/news/1721014/boko-haram-kills-women-over-witchcraft-charges
GIST	<p>MAIDUGURI: Nigeria's Boko Haram killed a group of women after accusing them of witchcraft following the death of a militant commander's children in Borno state, relatives, residents and a woman who escaped said on Monday.</p> <p>Accusations of witchcraft are not uncommon in Nigeria, a religious conservative country almost equally divided between the mostly Muslim north and Christian south.</p> <p>North-eastern Nigeria is at the heart of a conflict involving security forces and Boko Haram and its rival, the militant Islamic State West Africa Province group, which has killed more than 40,000 people so far.</p> <p>Last week, around 40 women were held in a village near Gwoza town on the orders of Boko Haram commander Ali Guyile, whose children suddenly died overnight, according to relatives and a woman who escaped.</p> <p>In interviews conducted on Sunday and Monday, they said the commander had accused the women of causing the children's deaths through witchcraft.</p> <p>Guyile, a 35-year-old commander, asked his men to arrest the women from homes known to practise witchcraft, said Talkwe Linbe, one of the accused women.</p> <p>Linbe said she managed to escape and fled to the regional capital Maiduguri after the killing of 14 women on Thursday (Nov 10).</p> <p>"He (Guyile) said he would investigate our involvement in the deaths of his children," she said.</p> <p>"On Thursday he ordered 14 among us to be slaughtered. I was lucky I was not among them."</p> <p>Her relationship to Boko Haram was not clear, but militants often force residents in territory under their influence into work or relationships.</p> <p>The relatives and residents interviewed did not specify how the women died, but the term they used in Hausa usually refers to militants slitting victims' throats.</p> <p>Nigeria's security sources said they were aware of the reports and were investigating, although they stressed the village was very remote.</p> <p>A Borno state government official said they were checking.</p> <p>On Saturday, the day Linbe arrived in Maiduguri, 12 more women were slaughtered accused of being witches, other relatives said.</p> <p>"I received a call from Gwoza that my mother, two aunts and nine other women were slaughtered yesterday (Saturday) on the orders of Ali Guyile, who accused them of being witches," said Abdullahi Gyya, who lives in Maiduguri.</p> <p>He also said he was told of the killing of an initial 14 women on Thursday.</p> <p>Tijjani Usman, who lives in Maiduguri but originates from Gwoza, said calls he received from relations in Gwoza corroborated Linbe and Gyya's accounts.</p> <p>Boko Haram seized Gwoza in July 2014. Although it was retaken by Nigerian troops the following March, the group continues to raid nearby villages.</p>

HEADLINE	11/15 Turkey: 50 in custody over bombing
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/turkey-makes-more-arrests-in-connection-with-deadly-bombing/
GIST	<p>ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish police have apprehended more suspects in connection with the bombing of a bustling pedestrian avenue in Istanbul that killed six people and wounded several dozen others, bringing the number of people in custody to 50, Turkey’s justice minister said Tuesday.</p> <p>Sunday’s explosion targeted Istiklal Avenue — a popular thoroughfare lined with shops and restaurants — and was a stark reminder of bombings in Turkish cities between 2015 and 2017 that crushed the public’s sense of security.</p> <p>Turkish authorities blamed the attack on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, as well as Syrian Kurdish groups affiliated with it. The Kurdish militants groups have, however, denied involvement.</p> <p>Police carried out raids in Istanbul several hours after the blast and detained 48 people, including a Syrian woman who is suspected of leaving a TNT-laden bomb at Istiklal. Police said the woman, identified as Ahlam Albashir, had crossed into Turkey from Syria illegally and has admitted to carrying out the attack.</p> <p>On Tuesday, Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag said the number of suspects in custody has increased to 50, but did not provide details. The state-run Anadolu Agency said police on Tuesday detained two brothers, identified as Ammar J. and Ahmed J.</p> <p>Ammar J. was allegedly tasked with helping Albashir flee Istanbul to neighboring Greece after the attack, while Ahmed J. allegedly drove a suspect who is still at large, to Edirne province, near the border with Bulgaria, Anadolu reported.</p> <p>“Turkey continues with its fight against terrorism with determination,” the independent T24 news website quoted the minister as saying. “No terrorist organization will succeed in any kind of plot against Turkey.”</p> <p>Around 80 people were hospitalized following the attack, of whom at least 57 have been discharged. Six of the wounded were in intensive care and two of them were in serious condition, officials said.</p> <p>The six killed in the blast were members of three families and included two girls, ages 9 and 15.</p> <p>The Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, has fought an armed insurgency in Turkey since 1984. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people since then.</p> <p>Ankara and Washington both consider the PKK a terrorist group, but disagree on the status of the Syrian Kurdish groups, which have been allied with the U.S. in the fight against the Islamic State group in Syria.</p> <p>Turkey has been infuriated by U.S. support for the Kurdish militia in Syria, and on Monday, Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly said he rejects messages of condolences from Washington.</p> <p>President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, however, posted on social media a chart with the flags of all countries that have offered their condolences — including the American flag — with a message expressing his “heartfelt gratitude” to all states and institutions that have “shared our grief.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Maldives arrests 14; IS-linked bomb plot
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SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/maldives-arrests-14-for-alleged-islamic-state-tied-bomb-plot/
GIST	<p>MALE, Maldives (AP) — Police in Maldives have arrested 14 people allegedly working with foreign Islamic extremists to carry out a bombing in the tiny archipelago state, police said.</p> <p>The suspects had been working with the Islamic State group and apparently planning an attack with the intent of killing many people, Uswath Ahmed, the nation's counterterrorism head, told reporters Monday night. He did not elaborate.</p> <p>He said the suspects were arrested last Friday in three locations in the country and 13 homes were raided. Maldives is known for its pristine beaches and expensive island resorts, but there has been a rise in religious extremism in recent years. The Sunni Muslim nation of 500,000 people had the highest number of people per capita fighting in foreign wars.</p> <p>The country's former president and current Parliament speaker Mohamed Nasheed was critically injured in a bike bomb attack near his home last year. Nasheed is known to be a liberal, pro-West politician.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 ISIS funding terrorism via Tinder scams
SOURCE	https://www.theaustralian.com.au/the-oz/news/isis-funding-terrorism-with-tinder-scams/news-story/ad2cdd9df8005c1a06e6a1f2b561680e
GIST	<p>At face value it looks like one of many romance scams that plague the world of internet dating: lovestruck singles strike up conversations or share intimate pictures online, only to be faced with demands for money or blackmailed when the conversation sours.</p> <p>However, con artists behind a new wave of “Tinder terror” which has snared lonely hearts on South Africa's version of the dating app are not your typical love rats or fraudsters but agents of Islamic State, which is using the proceeds to fund its atrocities and insurgency campaigns across Africa.</p> <p>Fake profiles using photographs of little-known actors or models are being used to draw in victims, said Nischal Mewalall, head of the South African Banking Risk Information Centre, adding that the group has set up bases in Africa's most industrialised economy to drive fundraising and recruitment.</p> <p>The watchdog has warned the public to beware scams that typically develop once connemen move the “dating” off official sites. The trend mirrors concern that South Africa has become the unwitting engine of Isis's renewal since its defeat in the Middle East. The UN security council reported that its monitoring team had “detected a number of transactions of more than dollars 1 million being channelled through South Africa by Isis leadership to affiliates in Africa”, including terrorists in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo.</p> <p>Martin Ewi, from the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, told the council that Isis had “expanded its influence beyond measure” into Africa, the likely “future of the caliphate”.</p> <p>The US Treasury announced sanctions last week against four “senior members” of an Isis cell operating in the country that was of “emerging importance for fund transfers from Isis leadership to Isis affiliates across Africa”.</p> <p>Last month the US took the unusual step of warning of a possible terrorist attack in a business district of Johannesburg where the first post-pandemic Pride march was due to be held. The UK Foreign Office echoed it, warning Britons to avoid large gatherings.</p> <p>American spies told media sources that chatter from a seven-strong Isis cell had triggered the alert - which drew a testy response from President Ramaphosa, who accused them of causing pointless “panic” and “without having any type of discussion with us”. Sources from his intelligence service said the warning had “disrupted” their own surveillance.</p>

No attack materialised, but that has done little to end unease. The failure by the Americans to share intelligence reflects a lack of confidence in South Africa's leadership, analysts said.

Africa has proved ideal for Isis to regroup thanks to its wealth of natural resources, tens of millions of citizens living in poverty, weak institutions and porous borders. The coalition forces that crippled Isis's operations in Syria and Iraq did not pursue its fighters when they fled south, leaving Africa to "bear the consequences", Ewi told the security council in August.

South Africa's excellent international links and communications infrastructure make it an ideal haven, even more so since its security structures were deliberately enfeebled to make looting of the state easier during the presidency of Jacob Zuma.

South Africa's police service has been left with a single officer dedicated to analysing data seized in terror raids, sources told investigators from the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime.

Extortion and kidnap-for-ransom cases have surged. In the first six months of 2022, an average of 1,143 kidnappings were reported to police, double the monthly average of the same period last year.

It seems increasingly unlikely that South Africa can avoid joining Turkey, Yemen, Syria and Panama on a "grey list" of the international global financial watchdog that sets standards to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. The label would make it harder for Ramaphosa to attract foreign investment.

An early clue to South Africa's appeal to extremists was the case of Samantha Lewthwaite, a British convert to Islam and widow of one of the 2005 London bombers. She is suspected of having helped al-Shabaab plot its 2014 attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi in which 67 people were killed. She was discovered to have been living in South Africa since at least 2008, but has not been traced since 2013 when Interpol issued an arrest notice.

A number of South Africans have trained at camps in the Middle East, according to intelligence sources, and dozens are fighting over in a worsening insurgency in northern Mozambique where Isis has seized on a pocket of conflict to entrench its influence.

The mayhem threatens a region that has so far been left mostly unscathed by Islamist extremism.

Ramaphosa's deployment of troops to support efforts against jihadists in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo also increases South Africa's risk of becoming a target for terror as well as its engine room.

Jasmine Opperman, an expert on extremism and political violence, said conditions were now in place to make a terrorist attack "inevitable" in South Africa.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Taliban revive Sharia-law punishments
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/14/taliban-run-afghanistan-brings-back-executions-and/
GIST	<p>Executions, stonings and amputations are possible punishments for crimes once more in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.</p> <p>Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhundzada ordered Afghan judges to impose Sharia-law punishments for certain crimes, according to a tweet from Zabihullah Mujahid, Mr. Akhundzada's spokesman.</p> <p>"Carefully examine the files of thieves, kidnappers and seditionists," Mr. Mujahid quoted the Taliban's leader as saying. "Those files in which all the Sharia conditions of hudud and qisas have been fulfilled, you are obliged to implement. This is the ruling of sharia, and my command, which is obligatory."</p> <p>Hududs are crimes against God that have their punishments outlined in the Quran, which include the amputation of hands and feet, flogging and death, according to the Department of Justice.</p>

	<p>Qisas are punishments for murders or physical assaults that are determined by a judge. The University of Texas School of Law said that can often involve a retaliation by the victim or relatives of the victim, or by paying blood money.</p> <p>Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, one of the Taliban's founders, told The Associated Press in 2021 that the Islamist group intended to bring back Quranic punishments for crimes. However, he said that the Taliban may no longer carry them out in public.</p> <p>The move comes after a week in which the Taliban banned women from going to gyms and public bath houses, as well as barring them from amusement parks and public parks.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 US: Iran threats to ex-officials still persist
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/14/us-says-iran-threats-to-ex-officials-mike-pompeo-b/
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The Biden administration has determined that Iranian threats against former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and one of his former top aides remain credible and persist nearly two years after they left office.</p> <p>The State Department notified Congress last week that both Pompeo and Brian Hook, who served as special representative for Iran during the Trump administration, were still both subject to a “serious and credible threat from a foreign power or agent of a foreign power” stemming from their work while in government.</p> <p>The determinations - which mean Pompeo and Hook will continue to receive government protection - were signed by Deputy Secretary of State for Management Brian McKeon on Nov. 8 and sent to Congress on Nov. 9, according to the notifications obtained by The Associated Press.</p> <p>“I hereby determine that the specific threat with respect to former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo persists,” McKeon wrote. He used identical language to refer to the threat against Hook.</p> <p>The AP reported in March that the State Department was paying more than \$2 million per month to provide 24-hour security to Pompeo and Hook. The latest determinations - the eighth for Hook and the fifth for Pompeo since they left government in January 2021 - did not give a dollar amount for the protection.</p> <p>The notifications do not specifically identify Iran as the source of the threats, but Iranian officials have long vented anger at Pompeo and Hook for leaving the Trump administration's “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, including designating Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a “foreign terrorist organization” and subjecting it to unprecedented sanctions.</p> <p>In addition, some Iranian officials have accused them of green-lighting a U.S. drone strike that killed IRGC commander Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad in Jan. 2020.</p> <p>The State Department had no immediate comment on the notifications. Hook declined to comment and a spokesman for Pompeo did not immediately respond to an inquiry.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Turkey detains Syrian bombing suspect
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/suspect-arrested-deadly-istanbul-bombing-minister-93246552
GIST	<p>ISTANBUL -- Turkish police said Monday they have detained a Syrian woman with suspected links to Kurdish militants and that she confessed to planting a bomb that exploded on a bustling pedestrian avenue in Istanbul, killing six people and wounding several dozen others. Kurdish militants strongly denied any links to the bombing.</p>

Sunday's explosion hit Istiklal Avenue, a popular thoroughfare lined with shops and restaurants that leads to Taksim Square.

"A little while ago, the person who left the bomb was detained by our Istanbul Police Department teams," Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu announced early Monday. Police later identified the suspect as Ahlam Albashir, a Syrian citizen.

The Istanbul Police Department said videos from around 1,200 security cameras were reviewed and raids were carried out at 21 locations. At least 46 other people were also detained for questioning.

The suspect allegedly departed the scene in a taxi after leaving TNT-type explosives on the crowded avenue, police said.

Sunday's explosion was a shocking reminder of the anxiety that gripped Turkey when such attacks were common. The country was hit by a string of deadly bombings between 2015 and 2017, some by the Islamic State group, others by Kurdish militants who seek increased autonomy or independence.

Police said the suspect told them during her interrogation that she had been trained as a "special intelligence officer" by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, as well as the Syrian Kurdish group the Democratic Union Party and its armed wing. She entered Turkey illegally through the Syrian border town of Afrin, police said.

The Kurdistan Workers Party denied involvement in a statement, saying it did not target civilians. In Syria, the main Kurdish militia group, People's Defense Units, denied any links to the suspect. The group maintained that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was trying to gather international support for his plans to launch a new incursion into northern Syria ahead of next year's elections.

Soylu said the suspect would have fled to neighboring Greece if she hadn't been detained.

Asked about Soylu's comments, Greek government spokesman Giannis Oikonomou reiterated Greece's condolences and stressed that the government "is steadily against any terrorist act. What happened in Istanbul is abhorrent and condemnable."

Earlier, Soylu said security forces believe that instructions for the attack came from Kobani, the majority Kurdish city in northern Syria that borders Turkey. He said the attack would be avenged.

"We know what message those who carried out this action want to give us. We got this message," Soylu said. "Don't worry, we will pay them back heavily."

Soylu also blamed the United States, claiming that a condolence message from the White House was akin to "a killer being first to show up at a crime scene." Turkey has been infuriated by U.S. support for Syrian Kurdish groups.

In its message, the White House said it strongly condemned the "act of violence" in Istanbul, adding: "We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our NATO ally (Turkey) in countering terrorism."

Turkish television broadcast footage purporting to show the main suspect being detained at a house where she was allegedly hiding. It said police searching the house also seized large amounts of cash, gold and a gun.

The minister told reporters that Kurdish militants had allegedly given orders for the main suspect to be killed to avoid evidence being traced back to them.

Istanbul Gov. Ali Yerlikaya said of the 81 people hospitalized in the attack, 57 have been discharged. Six of the wounded were in intensive care and two of them were in life-threatening condition, he said. The six killed in the blast were members of three families and included children ages 9 and 15.

Funerals were held Monday for the six victims, including Adem Topkara and his wife, Elif Topkara, who had left their two young children with their aunt and were taking a stroll down Istiklal at the time of the blast.

Istiklal Avenue was reopened to pedestrian traffic at 6 a.m. Monday after police concluded inspections. People began leaving carnations at the site of the blast, while the street was decorated with hundreds of Turkish flags.

Mecid Bal, a 63-year-old kiosk owner, said his son was caught up in the blast and called him from the scene.

"Dad, there are dead and wounded lying on the ground. I was crushed when I stood up" to run, Bal quoted him as saying.

Restaurant worker Emrah Aydinoglu was talking on the phone when he heard the explosion.

"I looked out of the window and saw people running," the 22-year-old said. "People were lying on the ground, already visible from the corner of the street (I was in). They were trying to call (for help), whether it was an ambulance or the police. All of them were shrieking and crying."

The Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, has fought an armed insurgency in Turkey since 1984. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people since then.

Ankara and Washington both consider the PKK a terrorist group, but they diverge on the issue of the Syrian Kurdish groups, which have fought against IS in Syria.

In recent years, Erdogan has led a broad crackdown on the militants as well as on Kurdish lawmakers and activists. Amid skyrocketing inflation and other economic troubles, Erdogan's anti-terrorism campaign is a key rallying point for him before Turkey's presidential and parliamentary elections next year.

Following the attacks between 2015 and 2017 that left more than 500 civilians and security personnel dead, Turkey launched cross-border military operations into Syria and northern Iraq against Kurdish militants, while also cracking down on Kurdish politicians, journalists and activists at home.

"In nearly six years, we have not experienced a serious terrorist incident like the one we experienced yesterday evening in Istanbul. We are ashamed in front of our nation in this regard," Soylu said.

Turkey's media watchdog imposed restrictions on reporting on Sunday's explosion — a move that bans the use of close-up videos and photos of the blast and its aftermath.

Access to Twitter and other social media sites was also restricted on Sunday.

[Return to Top](#)

Suspicious, Unusual

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 German army uniforms with 'SS' labels
SOURCE	https://www.ipost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-722401
GIST	German army uniforms have been mistakenly issued with "SS" size labels after a "production problem" reportedly occurred when the initials were thought to be an acronym for the size: "small, short." As reported by <i>The Jewish Chronicle</i> , The German Federal Ministry of Defense has since ordered removal of the labeled combat equipment, which includes helmets, sleeping bags and waterproof jackets to its troops.

The ministry reportedly chalked the incident up to a "production problem."

Forbidden initials

[The initials "SS"](#) are often associated with the Schutzstaffel, Adolph Hitler's agency of surveillance and terror in Nazi Germany who orchestrated the murder of six million Jews during the Holocaust.

[German law](#) bans the display of any Nazi iconography, with the combination of "S" and "S" even being forbidden from car number plates in all of the country's states.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Horrifying drug 'Tranq Dope' is spreading
SOURCE	https://www.vice.com/en/article/akegje/tranq-dope-in-united-states
GIST	<p>After two years of sobriety, Allie Gramlich began using drugs again in April. This time around, Philadelphia's street opioid supply was infiltrated with tranq or tranq dope, a mixture of fentanyl mixed and the animal tranquilizer xylazine. The high was non-existent, she said, replaced by hours of unconsciousness followed by intense withdrawal—and when she wanted to come off it only a couple months later, the detox was even worse.</p> <p>"It was honestly the most traumatizing experience I've ever had in my life."</p> <p>When Gramlich, 28, had previously detoxed off heroin and fentanyl, she said she was sick for about a week. But with tranq, she said her dopesickness—which included constant vomiting, intense heart palpitations, chills, and a complete lack of energy—lasted 21 days. She was given drugs like methadone and clonidine, which is used to treat anxiety, to help ease the withdrawal, but she said "there was no comfort at all the entire time."</p> <p>"These detox centers, these rehabs, they have no idea what they're in for. They have no idea how to treat it. Some of them don't even know what xylazine is."</p> <p>Gramlich went to an inpatient treatment program run by Recovery Centers of America, which she described as "one of the nicer rehabs." Still, she said, she wasn't tested for xylazine, and no one she came across was familiar enough with xylazine to discuss it with her. She said she didn't start feeling normal again until a week after she left rehab and went into a sober living house.</p> <p>"I would encourage anyone to go to detox, but like my heart would break for them knowing what they were for," she said. "Some of these people have been using this shit for years and if it was that bad for me I cannot even imagine... how bad it would be."</p> <p>Recovery Centers of America did not respond to VICE News' request for comment.</p> <p>While Philadelphia is an epicenter for xylazine in the U.S., data exclusively shared with VICE News shows the drug has spread to at least 39 states. But doctors, governments, and the rehab industry are struggling to cope with its noxious effects. It knocks users out for hours at a time; causes more severe overdoses, as xylazine doesn't respond to naloxone; and has been linked to severe skin ulcers, wounds, and amputations, as VICE News previously reported. On top of that, many drug users aren't even aware that they're taking it, and because there's no quick turnaround test for xylazine in rehabs and hospitals, they won't necessarily find out—and neither will the people taking care of them. Because there are no best practices for detoxing off tranq, many users who want to quit are fearful that they won't have access to medication that will take the edge off of their excruciating withdrawal. In a recent post about xylazine, one rehab said, "Tranq just might mean never coming back—ever."</p> <p>"Most people, when you talk to them, they're like, 'I'm not going to rehab.' It's just too painful," said Sarah Laurel, founder of Savage Sisters, a harm reduction group in Philadelphia. "They're not going to sit there and be miserable and uncomfortable for two weeks."</p>

Xylazine is a veterinary sedative that is not FDA-approved for human consumption, but it's not federally scheduled, making it easy to purchase online. It was detected in Puerto Rico's drug supply in the early 2000s but has since made its way to the northeast United States, where it [appears to be most prevalent](#) in drug deaths in Pennsylvania.

Most commonly found in bags of drugs sold as fentanyl and heroin, xylazine was found in 90 percent of dope samples tested in Philadelphia in 2021, according to the city. It went from being found in less than 2 percent of the city's fatal opioid overdoses from 2010 to 2015 to 34 percent in 2021.

And now it's spreading to the rest of the country. NMS Labs, the largest private forensic toxicology lab in the country, looked at 260,000 samples screened for xylazine between January 2019 and June 2022. The results, provided to VICE News, found that positive samples—taken from suspected impaired driving cases and autopsies in the U.S. and Canada—increased five-fold during that time. In January 2019, samples from 41 states showed xylazine present in eight states and Puerto Rico—by June 2022, samples from all 50 states showed xylazine in 39 of them as well as Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

Aegis Sciences Corporation, one of the few labs that does urine and oral fluid testing for xylazine from samples taken from rehabs, told VICE News it has found the tranquilizer in 30 states in 2022, though Josh Schrecker, the lab's director of clinical affairs, said it's likely there are drugs in every state that have been adulterated with the animal sedative.

But it's hard to get a true sense of how many people are using xylazine. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's overdose stats track synthetic opioids like fentanyl, they don't yet include xylazine-related deaths. The data we do have is piecemeal, coming from local health departments, coroner's offices, and drug checking services.

"[Xylazine] is becoming more and more prevalent in fatality, so if there is no way for a user to even test and determine if it's in their supply and for medical professionals to also not know upfront what they're treating—it's a problem," said Dr. Phillip Moore, chief medical officer of Gaudenzia, a non-profit that has multiple recovery centers in the northeast.

Rehabs can be another source of data for drug use, but most don't screen for xylazine. Because it's a relatively new contaminant in the drug supply, xylazine isn't included on typical drug screens in rehabs, which test for up to a dozen of the most commonly used illicit substances, like cocaine, opioids, and benzodiazepines. Those immunoassay tests use urine to provide quick results but toxicology experts told VICE News there is no immunoassay test for xylazine in the U.S. ([A Canadian company](#) has just reportedly come out with test strips.) That means facilities that want to test their patients for tranq have to send their results out to a specialized lab, such as Aegis, which is slower and more expensive. Aegis said its tests typically take 72 hours, which isn't as useful to a facility providing acute care to someone who is in withdrawal.

VICE News reached out to 10 rehab facilities in and around Philadelphia to ask if they send out samples to a lab for xylazine testing or have specific xylazine-related protocols. Of the four that responded, none regularly sent out client's samples to have them tested for xylazine. Their reasons for not doing so included the tests not coming back quickly enough to be relevant to a person's care and insurance not covering the tests. All four said they were aware that xylazine was in the drug supply and that if their clients were using bags of fentanyl, there was a high likelihood they were also using xylazine. All of the facilities who responded also said they treated tranq users based on first-hand experiences and trial and error, because best practices don't exist.

The FDA issued an [alert](#) about xylazine on Nov. 8, noting that "health care professionals should provide supportive measures and consider screening for xylazine using appropriate tests." The agency also said people who stop using xylazine abruptly can experience severe withdrawal but "no medications have an FDA-approved indication to manage xylazine withdrawal in symptomatic individuals."

In some ways, xylazine is following the same path as fentanyl, which rehabs didn't regularly test for until a few years ago. That meant people seeking treatment weren't always given opioids for their withdrawal because they didn't test positive for drugs, sources in the rehab industry told VICE News. In the meantime, fentanyl rapidly infiltrated the drug supply and overdoses spiked, leaving addictions experts and harm reductionists scrambling. While North America still doesn't have a handle on the fentanyl crisis, strong adulterants like xylazine are making the situation a lot worse.

Moore said Gaudenzia sometimes sends out samples for xylazine testing when a client is going through detox and showing resistance to medication-assisted treatment (MAT)—drugs like methadone or buprenorphine, which are the gold standard for treating opioid addiction. (Research shows that people who don't receive MAT are much [more likely](#) to start using drugs again.)

"When you start MAT you have that instant relief," he said. But xylazine doesn't hit the opioid receptors, so opioid treatments don't provide the same feeling.

"They're still experiencing tremulousness, anxiety, problems sleeping, restlessness, sweats."

He said he's had some success with giving clients clonidine, which comes from the imidazoline class of drugs; imidazolines work on receptors in the sympathetic nervous system, which are also impacted by xylazine.

Dr. Joseph D'Orazio, director of medical toxicology and addiction medicine at Philadelphia's Temple University Hospital, said it can be hard to tell which withdrawal symptoms are coming from fentanyl and which are coming from xylazine, but he said for tranq users, even when the opioid withdrawal symptoms have cleared up, there is often still severe anxiety.

D'Orazio, who has been treating patients who use tranq for years, said part of the problem is that street doses of fentanyl have gone up "tremendously," making opioid withdrawal harder to manage.

"It's just so difficult to match street doses when you're in an inpatient drug rehab, a detox, (or) a hospital. Patients are still in withdrawal despite maximal effort," he said.

One of the more grim markers of tranq are the wounds and skin ulcers that users develop—sometimes at the sites of injections but also in other parts of the body. There's no concrete scientific explanation as to what's causing the wounds, but Moore said xylazine may cause blood vessels to narrow and constrict, which can increase the time it takes the body to heal.

According to the city of Philadelphia, emergency department visits for skin and soft tissue injuries [more than quadrupled](#) between the first quarter of 2019 and the end of 2021.

At Temple, D'Orazio said tranq users can be treated for wounds and withdrawal simultaneously. But many inpatient rehab facilities can't treat the types of wounds that are common to tranq users, putting up another block to those people getting treatment. They're also getting turned away from sober living houses and even shelters because of their open wounds, he added.

"If we cannot place somebody in a drug rehab, a nursing home, a skilled nursing facility, recovery house, the shelter is the last place that we'll send them to," he said. "You cannot go to a shelter with an open wound. And so really, people are forced back onto the street and they have wounds, which is really unfortunate because we have already identified that these are people that have the worst disease and need the most help."

D'Orazio said the city needs to provide low-barrier wound care to people using tranq, which could include having wound care specialists visit inpatient rehabs and recovery homes.

The city's department of behavioral health and intellectual disabilities services, which oversees rehabs, did not respond to a request for comment.

D’Orazio said his takeaways come from his experience working with patients, but that there aren’t objective studies that have looked at xylazine withdrawal. Part of the problem, he said, goes back to the lack of testing.

“We need to build the impetus to do the research to look at and identify the withdrawal syndrome, to determine the cause of wounds, to determine the best pathway for treatment of xylazine withdrawal,” he said, adding he believes those steps are a few years away.

But getting clinical trials approved for xylazine would be an uphill battle, because it’s not approved for use in humans.

Schrecker, of Aegis, said part of the reason it’s hard to commit resources to developing immunoassay tests for novel drugs is it’s not clear how long they’ll be in the drug supply. There has been a push by some lawmakers to [schedule xylazine at a state-level](#), though nothing federally yet.

“A lot of times those things are driven by whether a drug becomes federally scheduled. That’s where we start to see things make a pretty quick exit out of the market.”

For advocates like Laurel, who has seen many people she knows die after using tranq, waiting for the medical establishment to catch up has been frustrating.

Laurel has been on a “crazy kick” trying to get rehabs to test for xylazine. She’s been handing out business cards to drug users around Pennsylvania that say “test me for xylazine,” in the hopes that more medical practitioners will learn about it.

At a recent event a couple hours outside of Philadelphia, she said a mother came up to her and showed her photos of her daughter, who has been living in an encampment.

“She was like, ‘Her boyfriend’s poisoning her. Look what’s happening to her skin.’ And I was like, ‘That’s not what’s happening. This is a different type of drug.’”

Laurel’s advice to harm reduction groups in other parts of the U.S. that are being hit with xylazine is to incorporate oxygen tanks and [rescue breathing](#) into overdose reversal; ramp up on-the-street wound care; and teach people how to inject drugs safely and more hygienically.

She’s not hopeful that xylazine will disappear from the drug supply anytime soon.

“It is much easier to access for drug dealers, because it’s less expensive, because there’s actually no restrictions on this substance. Why in God’s name would anyone ever stop using this substance?”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Snohomish Co. cold case solved after 42yrs
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/cold-case-solved-dna-snohomish-county-after-42-years-othaniel-philip-ames-i5-stilly-doe-forensic-pathology-unsolved-deaths-genealogy-arlington-washington-state-stillaguamish-river-medical-examiner#
GIST	<p>Modern scientific advancements have allowed Snohomish County investigators solve a mystery that had them stymied for more than 40 years – who was I-5 Stilly Doe?</p> <p>The unidentified body found 42 years ago in Stillaguamish River near I-5 in 1980 has now been identified as Othaniel Philip Ames, who was 82 years old at the time of his disappearance, according to records.</p> <p>“We are incredibly proud of the long line of people in the (office) and elsewhere who continued to pursue this case from 1980 until today,” said Snohomish County Medical Examiner Dr. Matthew Lacy.</p>

It began with a fly fisherman in 1980 followed by a team of inquisitive investigators 28 years later at the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office who reopened some closed cases that had gone unsolved for decades.

The I-5 Stilly Doe case was one of them.

Othaniel's body was discovered by a fly fisherman in the river near Arlington, Wash., on July 23, 1980.

An autopsy was performed the next day by a local pathologist, Dr. Clayton Haberman, who found no evidence of trauma, but there also was no evidence Othaniel had drowned.

Haberman did find evidence of coronary artery disease. The death was ruled "apparently natural" but the cause was classified as "undetermined."

Haberman reported the body was male, about 5 feet 7 inches tall, and weighed 150 lbs with gray hair.

A local dentist, Dr. Keith Leonard, performed post-mortem dental charts for comparison with known missing persons, but was unable to identify the body.

The body was buried Aug. 15, 1980, in Arlington Cemetery in Arlington.

For 28 years the mystery remained unsolved, but in 2008 the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office cold case team started to look at unsolved homicides and unidentified person cases because of recent improvements in DNA technology.

Leaders of the team included Sheriff's Detective Jim Scharf and retired Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Ken Cowsert.

By 2017, the cold case team determined they ought to exhume what became known as "I-5 Stilly Doe" for DNA testing because of advancements in forensic pathology, the key to unlocking the mystery of identification.

In May 2018, the team entered their mystery into the National Missing and Unidentified Missing Person System. Another post-mortem dental chart comparison along with radiographs was performed by forensic odontologist Dr. Gary Bell and were then also uploaded into the national database.

In September 2018, a Washington state forensic anthropologist, the late-Dr. Kathy Taylor, examined the remains and determined they belonged to an adult male, likely White but also possibly Hispanic or Native American. The mystery man was estimated to be between 5 feet 5 inches tall and 5 feet 9 inches, and between 45 to 59 years old at the time of death.

Taylor also found evidence of a well-heeled rib and spinal compression fractures.

That same September 2018, a femur bone section was sent to the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center for DNA extraction and the sample uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System in March 2019. No matches resulted.

From 2018 to 2021 the team managed to rule out many reported missing persons, but who was I-5 Stilly Doe remained elusive.

In 2021 the team began a collaboration with Othram, Inc., a genomics lab in Texas, to obtain advanced DNA profiles suitable for genetic genealogy with funding from DNASolves.com, a database used exclusively to aid human identification investigations to help law enforcement resolve cases.

By July the same year, Othram obtained a suitable DNA sample that confirmed the body's race as White. The team was also able to identify distant cousin possibilities that Deb Stone with Kin Forensics was able to use for a genetic genealogy analysis.

The county medical examiners office entered the case into the National Missing and Unidentified Missing Person System in May. Low-level matches turned up again, but were different from previous matches and that allowed Stone to build lines back to common ancestors.

Stone a potential matching set of great-great-great-grandparents who had descendants in Washington state. Stone spoke with a relative who mentioned an uncle, Othaniel Philip Ames of Arlington who went missing in 1980 at the age of 82.

Either a missing person report was not filed at the time, or the records were lost. But when Othaniel's granddaughter agreed to DNA testing, investigators were able to confirm I-5 Stilly Doe's identity.

Othaniel moved to Washington in 1951 with his wife and children. He worked at a paper mill and had a small dairy farm in Arlington. He was also a woodworker and a winemaker. In the early 1960s he and his wife separated.

Othaniel then moved to a small cabin in the woods of Arlington. He was last known alive in early 1980 after telling relatives he was traveling to Oregon and California to visit relatives.

I-5 Illy Doe was officially identified Othaniel Philip Ames, born Aug. 23, 1898 and died sometime in 1980.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 UW research: racist real estate covenants
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/community/facing-race/uw-researchers-racist-real-estate-covenants/281-92ab17e5-dd02-4c12-ba1a-6fd06414fec5
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — George Carter moved to Seattle from Mississippi in the 1970s to get away from the racism he felt growing up as a Black man.</p> <p>”You can’t drink out of the fountain... go to the back door to buy your food,” said Carter.</p> <p>But he said things haven't been much better in the Pacific Northwest.</p> <p>“People up here, they camouflage it,” said Carter, 78. “People up here, they laugh in your face and stab you in the back.”</p> <p>Carter said he wasn’t surprised to hear researchers have discovered more than an estimated 40,000 examples of western Washington neighborhoods established with racist language in the first half of the 20th century. Neighborhoods prohibited residents of “Negro blood” in Seattle or only allowed those “of the Aryan race” in Bellevue.</p> <p>State funding approved last year provided \$250,000 for researchers at Eastern Washington University and the University of Washington to look for racist or restrictive covenants.</p> <p>The language has not been enforceable since the 1960s, but lead researcher UW Professor James Gregory said doing the work is worthwhile.</p> <p>”We owe it to our fellow citizens not to waltz through life, ignorant about inequalities that still matter, that come from history, but still matter. So this is about awareness,” said Gregory.</p> <p>His latest maps and research can be found here. So far, researchers have released data on specific racial covenants for neighborhoods in King County.</p>

	<p>According to Gregory's estimates, his researchers have identified more than 30,000 examples of racist covenants in King County, an estimated 4,500 in Pierce County, 4,000 in Snohomish County, 2,500 in Thurston County and an estimated 2,000 in Whatcom County.</p> <p>Gregory started looking for language mostly on documents on microfilm starting in 2005.</p> <p>"That's hard," Gregory said. "That takes eyeballs and hours and hours of looking through reels and reels of microfilm for these restrictions."</p> <p>He said his researchers are training volunteers. They have more than 600, and he plans on going to legislators next year to ask for more funding to ensure all of the state's records can be examined.</p> <p>"The official practice of segregation promoted by the federal government, state governments, that's part of our history, as much as it's part of Mississippi's history," said Gregory.</p> <p>Researchers are not finished.</p> <p>"We're a long way from finishing with some counties," said Gregory.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Consumption, not crowd, key to climate
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/science/earth-at-8-billion-consumption-not-crowd-is-key-to-climate/
GIST	<p>SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — The world is getting hotter and more crowded and the two issues are connected, but not quite as much as people might think, experts say.</p> <p>On Tuesday somewhere a baby will be born that will be the globe's 8 billionth person, according to a projection by the United Nations and other experts. The Earth has warmed almost 0.9 degrees Celsius (1.6 degrees Fahrenheit) since the world hit the 4 billion mark in 1974.</p> <p>Climate and population is a touchy subject for scientists and officials.</p> <p>While more people consuming energy, mostly from the burning of fossil fuels, is warming the planet, the key issue isn't the number of people as much as how a small fraction of those people are causing way more than their share of carbon pollution, several climate and population experts told The Associated Press.</p> <p>"We do have a population problem and we do have a population issue," said Vanessa Perez-Cicera, director of the Global Economics Center at the World Resources Institute. "But I think most importantly, we have an overconsumption issue."</p> <p>And because of that the 8 billionth child born will "not have what we had ... because there's not enough resources," she said.</p> <p>Kenya, which is suffering through a devastating drought, has 55 million people, about 95 times more than the population of Wyoming. But Wyoming emits 3.7 times the carbon dioxide as Kenya. Africa as whole has 16.7% of the world's population but historically emits only 3% of the global carbon pollution, while the United States has 4.5% of the planet's people but since 1959 has put out 21.5% of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide.</p> <p>The average Canadian, Saudi and Australian put out more than 10 times the carbon dioxide into the air though their daily living than the average Pakistani, where one-third of the nation was flooded in a climate change worsened event. And in Qatar the per capita emissions is 20 times Pakistan's, according to the World Bank.</p>

“The question is not about population but rather about consumption patterns,” said climate scientist Bill Hare of Climate Analytics. “So it’s best to look at the major northern emitters to begin with.”

Climate Interactive, a group of scientists who run intricate computer simulations that can be tweaked to see what factors matter the most in fighting climate change, looked at the difference population makes. It found it made a small contribution compared to other factors, like economics.

Comparing two United Nations population projections scenarios of 8.8 billion people and 10.4 billion people, Climate Interactive’s Drew Jones found only a 0.2 degrees Celsius (0.4 degrees Fahrenheit) difference. But the difference between no price or tax on carbon and \$100 a ton was 0.7 degrees Celsius (1.3 degrees Fahrenheit).

Hare said there is more than a tinge of racism in the myth that overpopulation is the major issue behind climate change.

“One of the biggest arguments that I hear almost exclusively from men in high-income countries is that, ‘Oh, it’s just a population problem,’” The Nature Conservancy Chief Scientist Katharine Hayhoe said. “Nothing could be further from the truth.”

“The 50% poorest people in the world are historically responsible for 7% of heat trapping gas emissions,” Hayhoe said. “Yet when you look at which countries are bearing the brunt of the impacts from climate change, countries like Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Afghanistan topped the list.”

And even within countries, it’s the wealthiest who cause more of the carbon pollution, Hare said. Overall, he said, “80% of the population, the global population, emits a small fraction of emissions.”

The world’s population is growing mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia “and they’re contributing the least to man-made climate change,” said Colette Rose, project coordinator at the Berlin Institute for Population and Development.

Eight nations, five in Africa, three in Asia, are going to have at least half of the population growth between now and 2050, Rose said. They are Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India and the Philippines.

Worldwide population growth has substantially slowed, will likely peak sometime this century, and is now down to growing less than 1% a year, Rose said. But carbon emissions are growing faster, at 1% more this year than 2021.

For environmental advocacy groups and officials the issue of population and climate has caused problems.

“Population is an issue that no one has wanted to touch from the very beginning. Too politically sensitive,” Joanna Depledge, a climate historian from the University of Cambridge in England, said in an email. “There are many dimensions, notably in relation to religion and accusations of racism — population growth is mostly concentrated in non-white populations, of course.”

For a long time, the Sierra Club had promoted efforts to try to control the world population, until a couple decades ago, when the environmental group looked harder at the issue and broke down the numbers, said the group’s president, Ramon Cruz. They found the problems were more overconsumption and fossil fuel use and those problems would be the same “at 6 billion, 7 billion or 8 billion” people, he said.

While most environmental groups try to avoid the issue, 11 years ago, when the world hit 7 billion people, the Center for Biological Diversity made special issue condoms with population and environmental messages such as “Wrap with care, save the polar bear.”

Crime, Criminals

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 FBI: juvenile in dozens HBCU threats
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/11/14/one-juvenile-linked-dozens-hbcu-threats-fbi-says/10697993002/
GIST	<p>The bulk of the threats leveled against historically Black colleges earlier this year are believed to be linked to a single juvenile who has been prosecuted as a minor by state authorities, a senior FBI official said Monday.</p> <p>The juvenile was not identified, but the long-standing inquiry into more than 50 racially-motivated threats that unnerved the nation's Black colleges is believed to have been resolved with the suspect's identification and prosecution, said the official who was not authorized to be identified by name.</p> <p>Federal investigators initially identified "several minors" as possibly associated with the threats, which prompted a wide-ranging inquiry involving at least 30 of the FBI's 56 field offices, but later linked the communications to one person.</p> <p>Citing the suspect's status as a juvenile, authorities provided no descriptive information or where the person was ultimately prosecuted, except to indicate that the person was ultimately charged in connection with an unrelated threat.</p> <p>Since that time, the official said undisclosed restrictions have limited the juvenile's conduct.</p> <p>The senior official said an investigation is continuing into two other tranches of threat streams: one involving 19 racially-motivated communications between Feb. 8 and March 31, that have since been linked to Internet addresses abroad.</p> <p>Another set of threats, involving about 250 schools and have no racial component, have been tracked since June 7.</p> <p>The official said federal investigators are making progress, but are "not done."</p> <p>Walter Kimbrough, a member of President Joe Biden's HBCU council and former president of Dillard University, called the identification of a primary suspect "great news."</p> <p>"Finding out who was doing this sends a message that there will be accountability," Kimbrough said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/15 Activists attack painting in Vienna museum
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/europe-business-painting-austria-cebdb084b7e9c2ceabf046ffa48b2d7e
GIST	<p>BERLIN (AP) — Climate activists in Austria on Tuesday attacked a famous painting by artist Gustav Klimt with a black, oily liquid and one then glued himself to glass protecting the painting's frame.</p> <p>Members of the group Last Generation Austria tweeted they had targeted the 1915 painting "Death and Life" at the Leopold Museum in Vienna to protest their government's use of fossil energies.</p> <p>After throwing the liquid on the painting, which wasn't damaged, one activist was pushed away by a museum guard while another glued his hand to the glass over the painting's frame.</p> <p>The group defended the protest, saying in a tweet that they were protesting "oil and gas drilling," which they called "a death sentence to society."</p>

In a video of the incident, which the group posted online, one of the activists can be heard shouting that “we have known about the problem for 50 years — we must finally act, otherwise the planet will be broken.”

“Stop the fossil fuel destruction. We are racing into a climate hell,” he added.

After the attack, police arrived at the museum and the black liquid was quickly cleaned off the glass protecting the painting, Austria Press Agency reported.

Despite thorough controls at the museum’s entrance, the activists succeeded in bringing the liquid inside by hiding it in a hot water bottle under their clothes, the agency reported.

The Leopold Museum couldn’t immediately be reached for comment.

The Klimt work is an oil on canvas painting in the Art Nouveau style depicting death on the left side and a group of partially naked, hugging people on the right side. It’s one of the latest pieces of art to be targeted by climate activists to draw attention to global warming.

Different activist groups have staged numerous demonstrations in recent months, including blocking streets and [throwing mashed potatoes at a Claude Monet painting](#) in Germany.

The British group Just Stop Oil threw tomato soup at [Vincent van Gogh’s “Sunflowers”](#) in London’s National Gallery last month.

Just Stop Oil activists also glued themselves to the frame of an early copy of Leonardo da Vinci’s “The Last Supper” at London’s Royal Academy of Arts, and to John Constable’s “The Hay Wain” in the National Gallery.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Uvalde PD chief knew kids needed rescue
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/14/us/uvalde-investigation-acting-police-chief-mariano-pargas/index.html
GIST	<p>Uvalde, TexasCNN — Uvalde’s acting police chief knew there were “eight to nine” children alive and needing rescue from a shooter in the classrooms at Robb Elementary but failed to organize help, new audio of a phone call and CNN analysis of newly obtained video shows.</p> <p>Lt. Mariano Pargas called his Uvalde Police Department dispatchers to get details after they relayed a call over the police radio from 10-year-old Khloie Torres that she was in a room “full of victims,” according to a recorded conversation obtained by CNN from sources close to the investigation into the failed law enforcement response to the massacre.</p> <p>Communication failures and a lack of leadership in the chaotic response are blamed for why it took 77 minutes to stop the gunman who holed up in two conjoining classrooms, with some officers saying they were not made aware of the 911 calls from children and others saying they could not hear radio transmissions.</p> <p>Pargas’s phone call proves for the first time that a senior officer was directly made aware of a 911 call from inside the classroom and was given details on the exact location of children who were alive and begging to be rescued.</p> <p>The conversation, recorded routinely as part of police procedure, shows Pargas calling at 12:16 p.m., about six minutes after Khloie reached 911 and when she was still on the line with a dispatcher, and four minutes after the call information was relayed on the Uvalde police radio channel.</p> <p>“The calls you got in from the ... from one of the students, what did they say?” he asks.</p> <p>The dispatcher responds: “OK, Khloie’s going to be, it’s Khloie. She’s in Room 112, Mariano, 112.”</p>

Pargas asks: “So how many are still alive?” and is told: “Eight to nine are still alive. She’s not too sure ... She’s not too sure how many are actually DOA or possibly injured. We’re trying ...”

Pargas ends the call with “OK, OK thanks” and disconnects.

Based on analysis of surveillance and body cameras at the scene, he walks back into the hallway at 12:17 p.m. and mentions injured victims to a Border Patrol officer. At 12:18 p.m., he does not mention the children when a Texas Ranger talks to him about organizing the flow of information.

Pargas is last observed walking away from the school’s entrance at 12:20 p.m. New angles of the hallway security cameras obtained by CNN confirm Pargas does not reenter the hallway near room 112 where officers are gathering and eventually breach the classroom door some 30 minutes later.

Officers entered the classrooms and killed the shooter at 12:50 p.m., 77 minutes after he began his murderous rampage inside the school. [Nineteen children and two teachers died](#) after the attack in Uvalde, Texas, last May 24. At least three of the dead – two children and one teacher – survived their initial injuries and died after the classrooms were breached.

Pargas [was placed on administrative leave](#) by Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin in July when videos from body cameras raised questions about whether he had taken any action to assume command. “This administrative leave is to investigate whether Lt. Pargas was responsible for taking command on May 24th, what specific actions Lt. Pargas took to establish that command, and whether it was even feasible given all the agencies involved and other possible policy violations,” McLaughlin said in a statement at the time.

The recording of the phone call newly obtained by CNN only seems to underscore Pargas’s inaction.

When CNN reached Pargas by phone seeking comment for this story, he said he was unable to talk about anything to do with the police department on the advice of his lawyers.

“I want to defend myself. I really do,” he said on Monday. “There’s a lot of stuff that I can explain, that I would love to defend myself. And that’s the problem we’re having right now ... the victims and everybody’s saying everything they want to say, but we can’t say nothing because we were told not to talk to, you know, we can’t say anything cause we’re still under that, not to talk to any, media or anything.”

He added: “It’s not that we’re afraid because there’s nothing to be afraid of. We did what we could, but the thing is that we’ve been told that we can’t (speak publicly).”

Just last week, Pargas [was reelected as a Uvalde county commissioner](#) after defeating three write-in candidates including Javier Cazares, who lost his daughter Jackie in the shooting.

Clear details and no action

The audio of [the 911 calls from Khloie Torres](#) and [her classmate Miah Cerrillo](#), published exclusively by CNN with the approval of the girls’ parents, revealed the girls gave details and directions to the authorities at 12:10 p.m., more than 30 minutes after officers started arriving en masse at the school but still a full 40 minutes before forces entered the room to challenge and kill the shooter. Later in the call, after gunshots are heard, Miah says of the killer, “He’s shooting.”

Recounting what happened in an interview with a Texas Ranger and an FBI agent two days after the shooting, Pargas makes no mention of being aware at the time that children were with the shooter in the conjoining classrooms of 111 and 112, or of the 911 call, according to records of interviews obtained by CNN.

But he did know that teacher Eva Mireles had been shot in her classroom as he was told by her husband, a former member of Pargas’s police department then working for the school police, Pargas said. He said he

observed the officer, Ruben Ruiz, tensing, and decided he should be disarmed and taken out of the hallway.

“He was holding the gun real tight,” Pargas said of Ruiz in his interview. “And we were just afraid that he was gonna try to run in the classroom and try to do what I wanted to do if I could have done it.”

In a second interview in mid-June, when prompted about 911 calls from inside the classroom, Pargas said he did not have a clear memory. “I don’t remember. I really don’t,” he said. “I know somebody said, and I’m not sure if it was dispatch or somebody, I remember somebody saying that they thought there was a kid calling and calling dispatch that he was inside.”

Asked if he relayed that information, he replied: “I’m almost sure I did to the people that were lined up (in the hallway).”

Pargas did not mention his follow-up call with his department and said he did not know for sure there were children in the rooms with the gunman.

“We didn’t know who or what was in there because he was so quiet,” he told a Ranger. “We had no idea.” Later in the interview, he added: “The last thing we thought was that he had actually shot the kids. We thought he had shot up in the air, broken the lights. We had no idea what was behind those doors.”

Why the chief didn’t take charge

Pargas was acting chief of the Uvalde Police Department on the day of the massacre, while Chief Daniel Rodriguez was on vacation.

He told investigators he rushed to the vicinity of the school – about a mile and a half away – when someone came into his office to say there had been an accident and there was a man with a rifle.

CNN analysis of video from surveillance and body cameras shows Pargas was the fifth officer to run into the school hallway after the gunman.

Three of Pargas’s UPD officers were shot at as they approached the classrooms where the gunman had holed up, and two were injured.

But Pargas said he did not consider who should be in charge, especially once he saw then-school police chief Pedro “Pete” Arredondo.

“The minute I saw Pete Arredondo ... I figured this is school property and we’re here to assist pretty much. That’s normally what we do – when something happens in the school, we pretty much assist the school because it’s their jurisdiction,” Pargas told the Ranger gathering information in mid-June.

“I don’t think I stopped to say, well, who’s giving orders or who’s in command. We’re just trying to see what we could do as fast as we could.”

Arredondo has said he never considered himself the incident commander, though he did try to negotiate with the shooter as well as issue orders to those in the hallway with him.

More officers from more local, state, and federal agencies arrived, and there was no clear direction of what was going on inside or outside the school building.

As they stood at the entrance door at 12:10 p.m., guns drawn but static, a UPD detective asks Pargas about the Border Patrol tactical team: “Are we just waiting for BORTAC, or what’s going on?”

Pargas responds: “Yeah, they tell me the DPS Ranger found somebody and they’re going to come in.”

Another local officer then asks him for an “OIC” – an officer in charge – and Pargas appears to direct him to [Texas Ranger Christopher Ryan Kindell](#), who is himself now suspended and under investigation for actions he failed to take at Robb Elementary.

Pargas’s thoughts on whether to take charge did not appear to change as time went by and more information came out.

A [Texas House committee report](#) into the tragedy at Robb Elementary said the lack of any effective incident command was a key problem. The report, which faults the choices Pargas made, said the fact that UPD officers responding to reports of a crash and a man with a gun were first on scene would have made them initial commanders, and while Arredondo could then have assumed command at the school he would have needed to go outside the building to coordinate effectively.

Pargas had arrived at the school where his granddaughter was a student without a radio and may not have heard the transmission about Khloie’s call.

But one of his detectives made sure he was aware of what was said.

“Full of victims, child called 911 saying the room’s full of victims,” he is told at 12:12 p.m., as seen on footage from a body camera worn by another officer.

“The room is full of victims,” the detective reiterates as Pargas pulls the radio from the detective’s vest. “Child 911, child 911 call.”

Pargas then walks inside the school building where officers from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies were lined up at the end of a hallway leading to the classrooms.

“A child just called that they have victims in there,” he says before turning and leaving the area.

Two days after the massacre, Pargas told an investigator he wished more could have been done.

But then he gives some praise to the operation: “I think keeping him contained, I think it did save a lot more lives that could have been taken that day.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/15 Europol: 59 suspected scammers arrested
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/police-arrest-59-suspected-scammers/
GIST	<p>A recent month-long anti-fraud crackdown across Europe resulted in the arrest of 59 suspected scammers, according to Europol.</p> <p>The operation ran all through October as part of the 2022 e-Commerce Action (eComm 2022) initiative. It saw 19 countries come together in a bid to root out criminal groups that use stolen card data to order high-value goods from online shops before selling them on at a profit.</p> <p>Europol’s European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) and the Merchant Risk Council led the operation, with assistance from merchants, logistic companies, banks and payment card schemes.</p> <p>Police in participating countries tracked the locations where fraudulently purchased goods were delivered before arresting individuals at those addresses and confiscating the items.</p> <p>“Investigations are still ongoing in various countries, with more arrests expected in the coming weeks,” Europol warned.</p> <p>Online fraud can be a double blow for merchants as it not only results in chargeback costs that they have to pay to the defrauded cardholder, but also the loss of any items purchased with stolen card details.</p>

Although Strong Customer Authentication (SCA) recently [became mandatory](#) across Europe under the revised Payment Services Directive (PSD2), fraudsters are always looking for ways to circumvent merchant verification systems.

Europol highlighted the following as the three main threats to e-commerce:

- **Phishing, vishing and smishing** where card details are stolen by fraudsters impersonating legitimate businesses in emails, texts or phone calls
- **Account takeover fraud**, which is often enabled by phished or brute-forced account credentials. With access to accounts, criminals can use stored cards for payments
- **Triangulation fraud** where unsuspecting consumers are lured to fake sites by ads or phishing emails. If they attempt to buy the non-existent goods listed on these sites they'll also be handing over their card details to the scammers

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 FBI informants in Proud Boys
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/us/politics/fbi-informants-proud-boys-jan-6.html
GIST	<p>The F.B.I. had as many as eight informants inside the far-right Proud Boys in the months surrounding the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, recent court papers indicate, raising questions about how much federal investigators were able to learn from them about the violent mob attack both before and after it took place.</p> <p>The existence of the informants came to light over the past few days in a flurry of veiled court filings by defense lawyers for five members of the Proud Boys who are set to go on trial next month on seditious conspiracy charges connected to the Capitol attack.</p> <p>In the papers, some of which were heavily redacted, the lawyers claimed that some of the information the confidential sources had provided to the government was favorable to their efforts to defend their clients against sedition charges and was improperly withheld by prosecutors until several days ago.</p> <p>In a sealed filing quoted by the defense, prosecutors argued that hundreds of pages of documents related to the F.B.I. informants were neither “suppressed” by the government nor directly relevant to the case of the Proud Boys facing sedition charges: Enrique Tarrio, the group’s former leader; Joseph Biggs; Ethan Nordean; Zachary Rehl; and Dominic Pezzola.</p> <p>Because all of the material remains under a highly restrictive protective order, it is not possible to know what the informants told the government about the Proud Boys’ role in the Capitol attack or how that information might affect the outcome of the trial.</p> <p>A closed court hearing was held on Monday to discuss the informants in Federal District Court in Washington. Lawyers for the Proud Boys have asked Judge Timothy J. Kelly, who is overseeing the case, to dismiss the indictment — or at least delay the trial to give them more time to investigate the newly revealed informants.</p> <p>Judge Kelly made no decision at the hearing, according to a notice placed on the docket after the proceeding ended. Because it was sealed, journalists were not allowed in the courtroom.</p> <p>The dispute about the informants in the Proud Boys came on the heels of revelations that the F.B.I. also had a well-placed source in the inner circle of Stewart Rhodes, the leader of the Oath Keepers militia, another far-right group that took part in the Capitol attack.</p> <p>Last week, lawyers for Mr. Rhodes and four other Oath Keepers who are being tried on sedition charges planned to call the informant — Greg McWhirter, the group’s former vice president — as a defense witness, believing that his testimony would bolster their case. But on the eve of his planned appearance, Mr. McWhirter suffered a heart attack and the defense put other witnesses in his place.</p>

Questions about informants reporting to the government from inside extremist groups have been raised repeatedly throughout the Justice Department's sprawling investigation of the Capitol attack. They have included concerns about why the informants were not able to give the government advanced warning about plans to storm the Capitol on Jan. 6 or seemingly to corroborate accusations after the fact that the groups conspired in plotting the attack.

Former F.B.I. officials say there might have been gaps in what bureau intelligence analysts had told agents to ask their informants. Analysts at the bureau are supposed to help agents connect the intelligence dots to provide a clearer picture of threat activity. The F.B.I.'s [intelligence](#) directorate was created after Sept. 11 to help thwart terrorism and other threats.

It remains unclear what sorts of questions the F.B.I. was asking its informants in the Proud Boys and how focused the bureau was on the group's activities to undermine the results of the elections as Jan. 6 drew near. Previous court papers have suggested that some Proud Boys — including Mr. Biggs — were recruited by the F.B.I. before the election to provide information about their adversaries in the leftist movement known as antifa.

Last year, The New York Times revealed the existence of [an informant in the Kansas City chapter of the Proud Boys](#) who took part in the storming of the Capitol with a group of his compatriots. After the attack, the informant told his handlers in interviews that he was not aware of a premeditated plan to break into the building on Jan. 6, although as a relatively low-level member of the group it is possible that he was simply not privy to the making of such plans.

Right-wing media figures and Republican politicians have often sought to use the issue of F.B.I. informants in extremist groups to suggest that the bureau had a hand in guiding or encouraging the attack on the Capitol in a way that entrapped other rioters. No evidence has surfaced suggesting that the F.B.I. played any role in the attack.

But the lawyers for the Proud Boys have made entirely different claims, arguing that the information the confidential sources provided to prosecutors appears to be exculpatory and could contradict the government's chief allegation in the case: that their clients went to Washington on Jan. 6 with a plan in place to storm the Capitol and disrupt the transfer of power from President Donald J. Trump to Joseph R. Biden Jr.

The newly disclosed material called into question "whether a Proud Boy conspiracy plan to obstruct the Biden-Harris vote certification or to commit sedition ever existed or could have existed," J. Daniel Hull, Mr. Biggs's lawyer, wrote in papers filed on Monday.

The notion of whether there was a predetermined plan to attack the Capitol or whether the violence that erupted there on Jan. 6 was more spontaneous will be one of the key disputes when the Proud Boys' trial — now scheduled to start on Dec. 12 — goes in front of a jury. To prove seditious conspiracy, prosecutors will have to show that the defendants knowingly entered into an agreement to use force to stop the lawful transfer of power after the 2020 election.

If the information provided by the informants is indeed exculpatory, the lawyers for the Proud Boys could in theory call some of them to testify at the trial and rebut the government's charges.

A similar dynamic has been playing out in recent days in the Oath Keepers sedition trial, which could go to the jury as early as this week. [A central part of the defense's strategy in the case](#) has been to introduce evidence that the Oath Keepers had no explicit plan to attack the Capitol.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 SEA airport baggage thefts hit all-time high
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/kiro-7-tests-tracking-devices-airport-baggage-thefts-hit-all-time-high/FXRH5UKGXZH27PYK7BLC62LP4U/

GIST

SEATTLE — Baggage thefts are up this year at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and as people prepare to fly for the holidays, police are encouraging them to think twice about what they're packing and to even consider tracking devices.

According to police and airport officials, in 2019, before the pandemic, there were 179 baggage thefts at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

In 2020, that dropped to 145 as many people stopped traveling. In 2021, it rose to 231. So far this year, the figure is at 318, which is the highest it has ever been. The highest before this year was 295 in 2008.

Megan Morris and her family became one of this year's victims in January, when they returned to Seattle after celebrating her husband's birthday in Hawaii.

Until it wasn't. Morris and her family got to baggage claim about 30 minutes late due to a medical emergency on board their flight. By the time a person was helped off the plane, their bag was gone.

"Clothes, our shoes, our snorkel gear, souvenirs, presents," she said. "The saddest thing was both of my little boys had personalized blankets that their auntie had made for them in there."

They reported it to the airline and to the Port of Seattle Police, who try to monitor all the baggage carousels. Online, Port of Seattle Police posted several photos of a man they say took her bag and others.

"It is really frustrating and I don't want it to happen to anyone else," Morris said.

An airport official said the airport handles about 23 million bags per year, but acknowledges that if a person's bag is stolen, the numbers aren't much comfort.

Port of Seattle Detective Darin Beam said thieves are ready for more people to fly.

"Around the holidays does baggage theft pick up?" asked KIRO 7 reporter Linzi Sheldon.

"Unfortunately, it does," Beam said. "With the holidays, people go, they bring gifts. Grandparents are bringing gifts for the grandkids and unfortunately the baggage thieves know this. So we'll see a lot of people coming in just specifically to steal bags. But we also anticipate this and address it accordingly."

KIRO 7 asked the airport about when it's seeing the most thefts. A spokesperson said the busier the airport is, the busier thieves are as well, so weekends, as well as Thursdays and Fridays, tend to be favored days. The busiest times of the day at the airport for arriving passengers are from around 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

The Port of Seattle also points out that people are bringing and checking in more bags now than before the pandemic.

In 2018, at the airport, each passenger checked in an average of 0.32 bags, a number that's below one because some people just do carry-on. This year, that number has increased by 56% to 0.5 bags checked in per passenger.

More bags checked in mean more opportunities for thieves, so some travelers are fighting back with tracking devices that can help track down bags that are stolen or lost.

Body camera video from Atlanta Police shows them confronting an alleged baggage thief in March. They used a device in a traveler's bag to trace it to a train.

"What do you think about these devices—Air Tags, Tile, other things, to track your bag?" Sheldon asked Beam.

“I think they’re fantastic,” he said. “I use them myself.”

So KIRO 7 tested three of them right out of the box: an Apple AirTag, a Tile Pro, and the LandAirSea 54 GPS tracker.

The team put the devices in a suitcase and producer Julie Berg placed the suitcase somewhere in the airport. KIRO 7 reporter Linzi Sheldon waited upstairs by security.

The AirTag, priced at \$29, immediately indicated a location for both the bag and for the iPhone being used to track it, enabling the user to figure out which direction to go in.

AirTags send a Bluetooth signal detectable by your Apple device using the “Find My” app. But if your iPhone isn’t nearby, the AirTag can use any nearby Apple devices with the “Find My” app to send its location back to the owner. Apple boasts that this network consists of nearly a billion Apple devices.

The Tile Pro, priced at \$35, initially appeared to be across the street from baggage claim, perhaps in the parking garage, but then notified the user that it was “not in range.”

The Tile website states that it has “up to 400 feet” of range, which is described as its longest Bluetooth range. The Tile, similarly to the AirTag, uses its own network—anyone running the Tile app—to help update a Tile’s location. Both Androids and iPhones can run the Tile app.

The LandAirSea 54 GPS tracker was priced at \$30, but it also requires a tracking plan. The most basic plan, which provides location updates every 3 minutes, is \$20 a month, though there are discounts for prepaying several months.

It provided a very detailed image that appeared to show the suitcase on one of the airport’s skybridges to the parking garage.

While both the AirTag and Tile Pro can play sounds, the LandAirSea 54 GPS tracker lists no such ability in its user manual. All three can connect you to a mapping app, although getting to the map through LandAirSea’s app is less intuitive and takes more screen taps.

In KIRO 7’s test at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, KIRO 7 reporter Linzi Sheldon checked two skybridges. At the second skybridge, the Tile found a signal it called ‘strong,’ while the AirTag indicated that the suitcase was ‘far.’ As Sheldon moved along the skybridge, the Tile signal turned to moderate.

Sheldon tried the baggage claim level, and immediately the AirTag provided on-screen an approximate distance in feet, while the Tile indicated that the signal was ‘very strong.’ She found the suitcase underneath the beginning of the skybridge.

In this test, the AirTag performed the best at detecting different levels. In a later test, it continued to relay information about a bag’s whereabouts over the course of days as it moved during a cross-country trip. This was likely due to the bag being near iPhones that could help locate it. It continued to work through the end of the trip.

The LandAirSea tracker always maintained its detailed image, but that image made the item appear to be over Arrivals Drive in a skybridge. The LandAirSea tracker can also provide an approximate speed for the item to which it’s attached and is a popular choice for car tracking, although it was the first of the three items to stop relaying a signal in that cross-country travel test (it failed at 50% battery life after the plane took off).

In the same test, Tile was successful at providing a location in airports, but when the bag left an airport, it could not be tracked for several days. Upon the bag’s return to an airport, the Tile app provided an updated location. It continued to work through the end of the trip.

	<p>Tracking device or not, Detective Beam advises travelers to put any sentimental or expensive items in their carry-ons, not their checked bags. And if they do have to check in a bag, he advises them to make it stand out.</p> <p>“I’ve seen people that have covers for their luggage, that have pictures of kitty cats or palm trees,” he said. “Something that’s ideally unique and immediately identifiable... it potentially widens the amount of witnesses we have to a crime.”</p> <p>Megan Morris also wants to know if airlines and airports could do more to keep bags safe.</p> <p>“We should somehow be able to handle this so that it’s not the responsibility of the citizen to not be stolen from,” she said.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Federal Way police fatally shoot man
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/officer-involved-shooting-federal-way-apartment/281-145cab79-45c4-412d-ba8e-ec00452491ad
GIST	<p>FEDERAL WAY, Wash. — A man was found dead in a Federal Way apartment Sunday night after police say he shot at officers and they returned fire.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the Federal Way Police Department said officers responded to reports of a shooting just before 6:30 p.m. Officers said a man shot his sister when she arrived at the Park at Dash Point Apartments to check on his wellbeing.</p> <p>Friends took her to St. Francis hospital with serious, but not life-threatening injuries, according to police.</p> <p>Police contained the shooter's apartment. As officers removed neighbors from the area, the man fired more shots from inside the apartment. Investigators said the man came to a window and fired at officers, who returned fire. Officers did not know if the man was struck by gunfire, but he was unresponsive to any efforts from the SWAT team. Police said the man was pronounced dead by emergency crews when SWAT officers entered the apartment.</p> <p>A neighbor that has lived at the apartment complex for 12 years said on Monday morning that crime has been a problem in the area but not to this extent.</p> <p>"We heard a barrage of gunfire," the neighbor said. "It was completely covered out here at about 10:30 last night. Drones all over the place. It was just chaos. We went inside. My daughter was scared to death, so we just hunkered down inside thinking it was over. But apparently, it's still going on."</p> <p>The two Federal Way police officers involved in the shooting will be placed on administrative leave while the Valley Independent Investigation Team investigates. The Port of Seattle Police Department will be the lead agency investigating the shooting.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Police fatally shoot carjacking suspect
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/two-carjacking-suspects-flee-troopers-thurston-county/281-cf13d37d-16c6-42c2-a00e-db845093b46b
GIST	<p>THURSTON COUNTY, Wash. — Law enforcement shot and killed a carjacking suspect, and another was taken to the hospital Monday after they led authorities on a pursuit through Lewis and Thurston counties.</p> <p>One citizen was also wounded in the shooting with non-life-threatening injuries, according to Thurston County Sheriff's Lt. Cameron Simper.</p> <p>The pursuit started before noon in Lewis County.</p>

Lewis County Sheriff's deputies saw a vehicle that was wanted out of Oregon, according to police. The deputies pursued the car to Thurston County.

The suspects exited northbound Interstate 5 near mile marker 88 in Thurston County when shots were fired, according to Washington State Patrol.

Law enforcement followed the suspects onto Old Highway 99 near Tenino.

At one point during the pursuit, a witness told KING 5 that the suspects shot a woman who was in traffic ahead of him. The suspects then allegedly stole the witness' truck at gunpoint with his pitbull mix dog inside.

Another witness told KING 5 that he heard an officer tell someone on a loudspeaker to come out of their car. The witness heard three shots fired.

Multiple officers from multiple agencies fired at the suspects, according to Simper.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) said the police activity is causing traffic backups and delays on I-5 at milepost 88.36 near US 12 until further notice. The off-ramp to US 12 is partially blocked, WSDOT said.

Old Highway 99 is also closed between I-5 and State Route 507, according to the Thurston County Sheriff's Office.

The Gray's Harbor County Sheriff's Office will handle the investigation in accordance with state law on police use of deadly force.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Ingraham High before fatal shooting?
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/what-prosecutors-say-happened-at-ingraham-high-before-the-fatal-shooting/
GIST	<p>Ten minutes before a 17-year-old Ingraham High School student was fatally shot in a hallway last week, he was involved in a fight in a bathroom with five other students in a failed attempt to take a handgun from one of the teens, according to King County prosecutors.</p> <p>The 14-year-old suspected shooter, who was also involved in the bathroom fight, was charged Monday with premeditated first-degree murder in the 17-year-old's shooting death and also with first-degree assault, as charging papers say he is accused of shooting at a second 17-year-old boy.</p> <p>Prosecutors also filed a motion Monday seeking a discretionary decline hearing, asking a juvenile court judge to decide whether to allow the 14-year-old to be criminally prosecuted as an adult, court records show. If the case were to remain in juvenile court and the 14-year-old was convicted of murder, under state law he would have to be released from custody at age 21. Should the case be transferred to adult court and result in conviction, the judge would have the discretion to impose any sentence deemed appropriate.</p> <p>A 15-year-old boy, who was arrested with the 14-year-old on a Metro bus in North Seattle about an hour after the fatal shooting, was charged with first-degree felony rendering criminal assistance. A Glock 32 handgun was found in the 15-year-old's backpack, charges say. Both teens, who aren't old enough to legally have guns, were charged with second-degree unlawful possession of a firearm.</p> <p>The teens, who have been in juvenile detention since their Nov. 8 arrests, are to be arraigned Tuesday, when a judge is expected to revisit the issue of their detention as they await trial.</p>

The King County Medical Examiner's Office has yet to publicly name the 17-year-old victim because investigators are still working to scientifically confirm his identity, according to a spokesperson with Public Health — Seattle & King County. Scientific identification typically involves identifying someone through fingerprints or dental records.

But the charges against the 14-year-old say video footage and the results of an autopsy show the older teen was shot five times from behind, with the presumed fatal shot striking him below his left earlobe.

All of the teenagers involved in the Seattle Police Department's shooting investigation are identified only by their initials in charging papers, which is standard when referring to minors.

The Seattle Times typically does not name juveniles accused of crimes unless they're charged as adults.

Preliminary ballistic tests matched the Glock 32 handgun found in the 15-year-old's backpack to eight .357-caliber shell casings found in the school's hallway, according to the charges. The gun was reported as "lost" to the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office on Oct. 28, but the charging papers don't say how it ended up in the hands of a student at the North Seattle high school or who reported it missing.

A teacher at the school later told police the 15-year-old came to her classroom at 9:15 a.m. on Nov. 8 and begged her to let him speak with the 14-year-old, charging papers say. She denied his request and described him as being "extremely upset and on the verge of tears," but he wouldn't tell her what was wrong, say the charges.

Soon after, the 14-year-old was allowed a bathroom break and was "visibly agitated" when he returned to class, say the charges, adding the teacher denied the teen's second request for a bathroom break a few minutes later. When class ended, the 14-year-old was even more agitated and the teacher saw him punch a fist into his palm, prompting her to report her concerns to school security at 9:35 a.m., according to charging papers.

About 10 minutes later, six teens — the 17-year-old and two friends and the 14-year-old and two friends — squared off in a bathroom and fought over the gun, which one of the 14-year-old's friends had brought to school, charges say. During the scuffle, the 14-year-old's cellphone may have been taken by one of the others.

After the fight, the 14-year-old and his friends left the bathroom first and the 17-year-old can be seen in the video footage laughing at them as they left the area, according to the charges.

Another student, who wasn't involved in the fight, later told police the 14-year-old and one of his friends approached the three older students in the hallway at 9:55 a.m. and as they walked past each other, the 17-year-old was heard saying, "You're not gonna bust it" — essentially, that the 14-year-old wouldn't fire the gun, say the charges.

That's when the 14-year-old pulled a gun from his backpack and shot the 17-year-old from behind and continued to shoot after the older teen fell to the floor, the charges say. Other students in the hallway "immediately ducked and ran," including the second 17-year-old student who was shot at, say the charges.

The 14-year-old was seen on video running out of the school with a gun in his hand while the 15-year-old was seen by a teacher heading toward an exit at the time of the shooting, say the charges.

A photo of the 14-year-old was distributed to all Seattle police and an officer located the two teens on a Metro bus at North 145th Street and Aurora Avenue North at 11:02 a.m., the charges say. The gun found in the 15-year-old's backpack was empty of ammunition.

A woman who lives less than a half-mile from the high school later called police after seeing news reports about the shooting and the subsequent arrests. She told detectives that around 10 a.m., she saw two teens

	<p>she didn't know in her backyard and invited them inside after they told her there had been a shooting at their school, say the charges.</p> <p>The woman, whose offer to drive the teens back to school was turned down, surreptitiously photographed the pair before they left her house about a half-hour later, the charges say. Her photo matched those taken of the suspects by police when they were arrested, according to the charges.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 Lakewood cop killer's driver faces 3rd trial
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/lakewood-cop-killers-driver-faces-third-trial-new-criminal-charges/
GIST	<p>Nearly 13 years after Maurice Clemmons killed four Lakewood police officers, his accused getaway driver is now facing a third murder trial, and additional charges of possessing deadly weapons in jail.</p> <p>Darcus D. Allen, 51, is accused of driving Clemmons to and from the Parkland coffee shop where he gunned down the four officers on Nov. 29, 2009. A mistrial was declared Thursday in Allen's trial on premeditated murder charges after the jury hung 7-5 to convict. Jurors had been deliberating for about seven days.</p> <p>The state is seeking a retrial, which has been set for Jan. 9.</p> <p>Following his first trial, Allen was sentenced to 420 years in prison on four counts of first-degree murder in June 2011, but the state Supreme Court threw out the convictions and ordered a new trial in 2015, ruling that prosecutors prejudiced the jury by misstating the law that describes the knowledge an accomplice must have to be found guilty.</p> <p>In 2018, the high court ruled Allen could be retried for first-degree murder but not on aggravating circumstances that would increase his minimum sentence to life in prison without the possibility of parole or release. Allen's second trial began early last month.</p> <p>On Monday, the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office filed two additional felony charges against Allen, accusing him of hiding a "deadly weapon" — a sharpened ballpoint pen casing with a tape handle — and other contraband, including unauthorized underwear and trash bags, when a Pierce County sheriff's corrections deputy searched his cell at the Pierce County Jail while Allen was in court on Oct 26.</p> <p>Peter Mazzone, one of Allen's defense attorneys, said in an email that the new charges prove the prosecutor's office and Lakewood Police Department "will do anything and stop at nothing to keep this guy in jail."</p> <p>Mazzone said it is "beyond suspicious" that a corrections officer searched Allen's cell, after seven years of incarceration, to find contraband the day before his trial was scheduled to go to the jury.</p> <p>"This is crazy. This case has just taken on a life of its own," Mazzone wrote in the email.</p> <p>Mazzone said he will not seek a continuance for Allen, who has spent seven years in the Pierce County Jail during his appeals and awaiting trial.</p> <p>Adam Faber, spokesperson for the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office, said the office postponed Allen's arraignment on the contraband charges until after the jury had finished deliberations in the murder trial at the request of Allen's attorneys.</p> <p>Lakewood police Sgt. Mark Renninger and officers Tina Griswold, Greg Richards and Ronnie Owens were at the Forza coffee shop in Parkland when Clemmons walked up to their table and opened fire with two handguns. Clemmons was wounded in a struggle with Richards before the officer succumbed to his wounds.</p>

Clemmons was shot and killed by a Seattle police officer following a two-day manhunt.

Allen later said that before the shootings, Clemmons directed him to a car wash in Parkland and told him to wait. Allen said he figured out something was wrong only after Clemmons returned, and told officers he abandoned Clemmons and the truck later that morning because he wanted no part of what had happened.

Allen had previously attended a dinner where Clemmons threatened to kill police.

“I’m just heartbroken this guy is going through this,” said Mazzone. “In my heart of hearts, I know he didn’t know anything about what happened when he dropped Clemmons off near the Forza Coffee Shop that morning.”

Allen has maintained he was [oblivious](#) to Clemmons’ plans and that prosecutors painted him as a “scapegoat” for the public outrage following the officers’ murders.

“I’m sorry about what happened to your family,” [Allen said](#) to a victim’s widow during a 2011 statement. “If I could have stopped it, I would have stopped it. I had no idea this man was going to kill your family members. That’s the honest-to-God truth.”

Lakewood police Chief Mike Zaro released a statement Thursday saying he is “deeply disappointed” the jury could not agree on a verdict, and Lakewood Mayor Jason Whalen said Allen should be prosecuted “without delay.”

“He knew what Clemmons did, he saw his gunshot wound, and still he drove Clemmons from the scene and then hid in a motel under a fake name until police found and arrested him,” Zaro said. “Despite all these undisputed facts, this jury could not reach a decision and there will be yet another delay in achieving closure for our department and the families of our four officers.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/14 Officials: 4 slain Idaho students are victims
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Police-4-found-dead-in-home-near-University-of-17582120.php
GIST	<p>BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Officials say all four University of Idaho students who were found dead inside a home near campus on Sunday are considered victims in the case, but police have yet to release the cause of death or other details about the investigation.</p> <p>Police discovered the students' bodies just before noon as they responded to a report of an unconscious person at a home steps away from the Moscow, Idaho campus. The victims were identified as Ethan Chapin, a 20-year-old from Conway, Washington; Madison Mogen, a 21-year-old from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Xana Kernodle, 20, from Avondale, Arizona; and Kaylee Goncalves, 21, from Rathdrum, Idaho.</p> <p>The Moscow Police Department has labeled the deaths as “homicides” but maintains there is not an active risk to the community.</p> <p>University of Idaho president Scott Green said the students were all “killed” under tragic circumstances, and Moscow Mayor Art Bettge said all four of the students were considered victims in the investigation. Moscow Police Capt. Anthony Dahlinger told the Idaho Statesman Monday night that none of the deceased students are believed to be responsible for the deaths.</p> <p>The students likely died between 3 and 4 a.m., but they weren't discovered for hours, Bettge said.</p> <p>“The police got there at noon, nothing happened in the interim and nothing happened afterward, so it seemed to be a unique occurrence that was not apt to be repeated,” said Bettge. That timeline helped authorities determine that there was not an active risk, he said.</p>

	<p>Dahlinger declined to confirm or deny Bettge's description of the timeline.</p> <p>The university canceled classes on Monday, and said additional security staffers were available to walk students across campus if needed during the remainder of the week.</p> <p>Still, the lack of information about the cause of deaths — and the fact that police have said there is no one in custody — had many parents worried about campus safety and some students leaving for Thanksgiving break early.</p> <p>In a memo released Monday afternoon, University of Idaho President Scott Green urged university employees to be empathetic and flexible and work with students who decided to leave classes to spend time with their families.</p> <p>“Words cannot adequately describe the light these students brought to this world or ease the depth of suffering we feel at their passing under these tragic circumstances,” Green wrote of the slain students.</p> <p>The police said anyone with information should contact the department and asked that people respect the privacy of the victims' family and friends.</p> <p>Brian Nickerson, the fire chief of the Moscow Volunteer Fire and EMS Department, said police were the first to arrive at the home. The first responders from the fire and EMS department didn't go inside or transport anyone from the scene, Nickerson said.</p> <p>The city of Moscow is a close-knit college town nestled in the rolling hills of north-central Idaho, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) southeast of Spokane, Washington.</p> <p>The University said Chapin was a freshman and a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity, and Kernodle was a junior majoring in marketing and a member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. Mogen was a senior also majoring in marketing and a member of Pi Beta Phi, and Goncalves was a senior majoring in general studies and a member of the Alpha Phi sorority, the university said. The university also had different home town listed for Chapin and Kernodle than the towns listed in the Moscow Police Department release: The school said Chapin was from Mount Vernon, Washington, and Kernodle was from Post Falls, Idaho.</p> <p>A vigil for the slain students was set for 5 p.m. Wednesday on the University's Administration lawn, University of Idaho spokesman Kyle Pfannenstiel said.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/14 Dominican drug lord pleads guilty
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/dominican-drug-lord-pleads-guilty-us-federal-court-93283070
GIST	<p>SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- A powerful drug lord from the Dominican Republic known as “The Abuser” pled guilty to drug trafficking charges in U.S. federal court, authorities said Monday.</p> <p>The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Puerto Rico said César Emilio Peralta Adamez was accused of importing cocaine into the United States for a decade.</p> <p>Authorities said he led a Dominican-based drug-trafficking organization that imported tons of drugs from Colombia and Venezuela to Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland.</p> <p>Peralta’s attorney could not be immediately reached for comment.</p> <p>Authorities said they seized four of his properties in the Dominican Republic, including one called “Al Panino.”</p> <p>Peralta was indicted by a U.S. federal grand jury in 2018, arrested in Colombia in 2019 and extradited to Puerto Rico in 2021.</p>

	He is scheduled to be sentenced in May 2023.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 RCMP: public utility worker spied for China
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/canada-police-charge-hydro-qubec-employee-china-spying-93283146
GIST	<p>TORONTO -- Canadian police charged a Hydro-Québec employee on Monday with espionage for allegedly sending trade secrets to China.</p> <p>Yuesheng Wang, 35, will appear in court in Longueuil, Quebec, Tuesday to face charges of obtaining trade secrets, using a computer without authorization, and with fraud and breach of trust by a public officer.</p> <p>The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said its national security enforcement team began an investigation in August after receiving a complaint from Hydro-Québec's corporate security branch.</p> <p>RCMP Inspector David Beaudoin said it is alleged while employed with Hydro-Québec Wang allegedly used his position to conduct research for a Chinese university and other Chinese research centers. Beaudoin said he reportedly published scientific articles and submitted patents in "association this foreign actor rather than with Hydro Quebec."</p> <p>"He obtained this information to benefit the Peoples Republic of China to the detriment of Canada's economic interest," Beaudoin said.</p> <p>Beaudoin said he used the information without the knowledge or prior approval of his employer. The alleged crimes took place between Feb. 2018 and Oct. 2022.</p> <p>Wang, a resident of Candiac, Quebec, south of Montreal, allegedly had access to the relevant information as part of his job at the provincial utility, police said.</p> <p>In a statement, Hydro-Québec said Wang was a researcher who worked on battery materials with the Center of Excellence in Transportation Electrification and Energy Storage, known as CETEES. The utility said its security team launched its own investigation before quickly flagging authorities.</p> <p>"Our detection and intervention mechanisms allowed our investigators to bring this matter to the attention of the RCMP, with whom we have worked closely ever since," said Dominic Roy, senior director responsible for corporate security.</p> <p>"No organization is safe from a situation like this one, which is why we must always remain vigilant and transparent, and we must not tolerate violations of the company's code of ethics."</p> <p>The former employee did not have access to information related to Hydro-Québec's "core mission," and his accesses were revoked when suspicions arose, the company added. It said the center where he worked develops technology for electric vehicles and energy storage systems.</p> <p>Hydro-Québec is Quebec's public utility that manages the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity in the Canadian province, as well as the export of power to portions of the northeast U.S.</p> <p>The RCMP said foreign interference has emerged as a priority for law enforcement, adding that it is working with at-risk sectors to improve Canada's response and resiliency.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/14 UVA shooting suspect apprehended
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/suspect-large-shooting-university-virginia-police/story?id=92780963

GIST

A suspect is in custody after three football players were killed and two other students were injured in a mass shooting at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville on Sunday night, authorities said.

The shooting took place on a bus full of students returning home from a class field trip to see a play in Washington, D.C., university officials said.

All three victims killed were on the football team, University of Virginia President Jim Ryan said at a news conference. The victims were identified as [wide receivers Lavel Davis Jr. and Devin Chandler and linebacker D'Sean Perry](#).

The suspect, identified as student Christopher Darnell Jones Jr., was taken into custody Monday morning following an overnight manhunt, authorities announced.

Jones was a running back for the university's football team in 2018, though he never played in a game.

A motive is not clear, Ryan said.

One injured student is in critical condition and the other is in good condition, Ryan said Monday.

The shooting was reported on the University of Virginia's campus at about 10:30 p.m. local time, according to police.

University of Virginia sophomore Em Gunter said she was in her dorm when she heard gunshots.

"I looked over to my friend and like, 'Did you hear that?' I was like, 'I think that was like gunfire,'" Gunter recalled in a telephone interview with ABC News early Monday, while sheltering in place.

"I'm terrified," she said.

Gunter invited her friend Nicholas Lansing to shelter in her third-floor room, since his is on the ground floor.

"I have one locked door, but I also have a glass window that leads directly outside. So I've been up here on the third floor in Em's room for the past three and a half hours," Lansing, a University of Virginia junior, told ABC News via telephone.

The university's president canceled classes for Monday and Tuesday.

"Our hearts remain broken at the senseless loss of three members of our University community, Devin Chandler, Lavel Davis Jr., and D'Sean Perry," Ryan said in a statement. "We are also monitoring the progress of two students who are in the excellent care of our medical center."

Longo learned of the suspect's capture in the middle of Monday morning's news conference, when a captain with the Virginia State Police interrupted Longo and whispered in his ear.

"We've just received information that the suspect is in custody," Longo announced, before a lengthy pause absorbing the news.

"Just need a moment to thank God, breathe a sigh of relief," he said.

The 22-year-old was spotted driving in Henrico County, Virginia, and was taken into custody just before 11 a.m., according to Henrico police.

Longo said Jones is facing charges of three counts of second-degree murder and three counts of using a handgun in the commission of a felony. Charges could change, he said.

	<p>Longo also revealed prior history involving Jones. In September, university officials investigated a report of Jones making a comment about possessing a gun, but Longo said Jones did not make a threat.</p> <p>Jones was involved in a hazing investigation, which was later closed due to uncooperative witnesses, Longo said.</p> <p>The university's threat assessment team also learned of a prior criminal incident involving "a concealed weapon violation" from February 2021 in another city, Longo said. Jones is required as a student "to report that -- and he never did -- so the university has taken appropriate administrative charges," Longo said. That matter is pending, Longo said.</p> <p>White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement Monday: "The President and First Lady are mourning with the University of Virginia community after yet another deadly shooting in America has taken the lives of three young people. Our deepest condolences are with the countless families, friends, and neighbors grieving for those killed as well as those injured in this senseless shooting."</p> <p>The press secretary called on the Senate to pass an assault weapons ban. The House narrowly passed a ban in a symbolic vote in July.</p> <p>"We need to enact an assault weapons ban to get weapons of war off America's streets," the statement said. "House Democrats acted, and the Senate should follow."</p>
Return to Top	

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[Return to Top](#)